Spring 2010

# Parent and teacher perceptions of school partnerships in New Hampshire schools

Brenda J. Zarnowski
*University of New Hampshire, Durham*

# PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE SCHOOLS

BY

BRENDA J. ZARNOWSKI

Keene State College, B.Ed., 1969
Keene State College, M.Ed., 1976
University of New Hampshire, C.A.G.S., 2003

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

May, 2010

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

Thesis Director, Todd A. DeMitchell
Professor of Education

Thesis Director, Barbara H. Krysiak
Emerita Associate Professor of Education

Vincent J. Connelly
Associate Professor of Education

George A. Cushing, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools, Greenland, NH

Maryann J. Minard, Ph.D.
Director of Curriculum, York, ME

January 22, 2010
Date

# DEDICATION

To my family,

Thomas W. Zarnowski

and

Mark D. Zarnowski

whose

love, guidance, and

many sacrifices

helped make my dream

a reality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My quest for knowledge, for new challenges, and for renewal continued as I began my work in the Doctor of Philosophy in Education program, at the University of New Hampshire in September 2003. I gained knowledge, was challenged and renewed, and experienced so much more during the time I worked on my dissertation. I am deeply grateful to those whose wisdom and guidance have been a source of support as I this took this uncharted personal journey to complete my doctoral program. I sincerely thank:

My husband, Thomas W. Zarnowski, for his encouragement, patience, and unwavering belief that my dream of a Ph.D. was attainable.

My son, Mark D. Zarnowski, who I hope will always have the opportunity to pursue his dreams, and who was interested and very enthusiastic about my quest as he pursued his own interests and studies.

My doctoral advisors, Dr. Barbara Krysiak and Dr. Todd DeMitchell, who generously shared their knowledge, resources, and time with kindness, encouragement, and personalized attention that makes me deeply grateful for

their goodness and wisdom. To Dr. DeMitchell, who from our first mutual days at UNH encouraged me to pursue an advanced degree, and set high standards giving me the tenacity to pursue this endeavor. A very special thanks to Dr. Barbara Krysiak, my first UNH mentor, whose courses made my learning experience at UNH challenging and joyous, and who provided unwavering support and selflessly gave of her time and expertise to help me find my voice as a scholar.

Dissertation committee member, Dr. Vincent Connelly, whose mathematical expertise and sound advice permitted me to complete a quantitative analysis for my dissertation.

Dissertation committee member, Dr. George Cushing, who believed in me and who assisted me in this study by sharing his expertise and by modeling what it means to be an exemplary leader in public education.

Dissertation committee member, Dr. Maryann Minard, who set high standards and asked hard questions that pushed my thinking beyond the present and into the future.

My thanks to all of the UNH Department of Education professors who made my educational experience become a quest for lifelong learning and who instilled a love for learning in my academic studies as well as my work reading specialist.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE SCHOOLS

By

Brenda J. Zarnowski

University of New Hampshire, May 2010
Barbara H. Krysiak and Todd A. DeMitchell
Dissertation Co-Advisors

This quantitative, descriptive study assessed parent and teacher perceptions of the extent to which exemplary school-family-community partnership practices were being implemented at elementary and secondary schools within the state of New Hampshire. The teacher and parent participants were organized into four paired groups and were asked to indicate the frequency with which activities, that exemplify Epstein's six types of school-family-community partnership practices, were utilized at their respective schools to determine whether significant differences exist among teachers' and parent's perceptions of partnership program implementation.

The sample for this study was drawn from forty two elementary and secondary public schools across the state of

New Hampshire and a forced response survey device gathered information to determine parents' and teachers' perceptions about practices that create a comprehensive program of school-family partnerships.

Analysis of the survey data revealed significant variability in the perceptions of three paired groups of elementary and secondary school teachers and parents and negligible differences were observed in the perceptions of one paired group of teachers and parents. Additionally, the survey results determined that school level significantly influenced perceptions held by teachers and parents.

In addition to testing the formal hypotheses concerning the differences in perceptions of partnership activities between study groups, the results of the study were used to assess the extent to which schools represented in the sample were implementing the partnership model and it was determined most were deficient in their implementation of partnership practices.

Recommendations for future quantitative research into school-community partnerships are included in the study as are several recommendations regarding practice.

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## Statement of the Study's Purpose

This study assessed parent and teacher perceptions of the extent to which exemplary school-family-community partnership practices are being implemented at elementary and secondary public schools within the state of New Hampshire. The study's sample was drawn from parents and teachers and was organized into four groups: (1) elementary school teachers; (2) secondary school teachers; (3) parents of elementary school students; and, (4) parents of secondary school students. The participants in the four study groups were asked to indicate the frequency with which activities that exemplify the six types of school-family-community partnership practices, embodied in a model that has been adopted by the New Hampshire Department of Education, are being utilized at their respective schools.

The study design replicates an investigation conducted by Stephen Schulte (2004) with a sample of South Dakota public schools. The same research design and data gathering instrument that Schulte employed (2004) was used in this

study, with a sample drawn from New Hampshire public schools. However, a different statistical test was performed for the study at hand. The survey instrument used in both studies was devised by Salinas and her associates at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) and by Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University (Salinas, Epstein, Sanders, Davis & Aldersebaes, 2000) using effective partnership practice research findings reported by Joyce Epstein and her associates at the National Network of Partnership Schools. As in Schulte's study, the survey responses of the teacher and parent groups provided subjective indications of the status of partnership program implementation, but the study's primary purpose was to determine whether there are significant differences (statistically) between the four groups' perceptions of partnership activity levels.

The available empirical research indicates that there are several sets of barriers that continue to limit the adoption of effective partnerships including divergent and sometimes conflicting perceptions held by classroom teachers and parents (Barnard, 2004; Epstein, 2001; Lawson, 2003). "The proposed model of overlapping spheres" Epstein observed, "assumes that there are mutual interests and influences of families and schools that can be more or less

successfully promoted by the policies and programs of the organizations and the actions and attitudes of the individuals in those organizations" (Epstein, 2001, p.31). Partnerships among schools, families, and communities provide support and social resources to students, reinforce the importance of education among all participants (including students), and contribute to a holistic environment for the child's development (Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar, 2002).

Teachers and school administrators are continuously seeking effective ways to work with families, parents and communities to increase student success. Most parents and families are eager to learn how to help their children succeed and how to communicate with, and support their teachers. Most students strive for success in school and look to parents, teachers, and community members for guidance and encouragement. For over twenty years, Epstein and her associates as well as other researchers have found that "the quality of relations between schools and families plays an integral role in student success" (Mattingly, et. al., 2002, p.349). The interaction between family and school exerts a positive influence on the attitudes and behaviors of parents and teachers when both groups develop an awareness of the advantages of family/school alliances

and the focus of interactions becomes student learning. According to Redding and his associates, interactions between family and school also influence the attitudes and behavior of parents and teachers, "the cumulative effects of more frequent and higher quality interactions among teachers and parents are a greater reservoir of trust and respect, increased social capital for children, and a school community more supportive of each child's school success" (Redding, Langdon, Meyer, & Sheley, 2004, p. 6).

## Study Background

During the past three decades, empirical information verified the association between parental involvement in school activities and the academic performance of children and this has evolved into a comprehensive model of school-family-community partnerships that enhanced student learning and development outcomes for students while helping schools reach their goals for school improvement. The current school partnership movement can be traced back to the 1960s and the federal Head Start program's efforts to improve the school readiness of disadvantaged pre-school children through activities that required close and ongoing engagement of their parents (Epstein, 2001, p.39). The school restructuring movement of the 1970s that required parental participation in site-based decision making added

further impetus to the demands for increased school-family-community interaction. Despite these initiatives, in the 1980s the vast majority of public schools maintained a traditional service delivery model. Educational and developmental processes were under the control of educational professionals and the boundaries separating schools from student families and communities were sharply drawn and vigorously defended.

In 1981, Joyce Epstein and her associates at Johns Hopkins University began a series of research projects in the public school systems of Baltimore, Maryland and surrounding areas. Initially, Epstein and her researchers focused on elementary schools and eventually they affirmed that parental involvement contributes to school success. They also found that many parents wanted to have a greater and more active role in the education of their children but felt frustrated by a perceived lack of support and encouragement from school personnel, including their children's classroom teachers. The findings of Epstein and her colleagues' first wave of research studies showed significant variance across schools. Parents at some schools expressed considerably greater satisfaction with their level of involvement in the education of their children. Epstein and her associates used these results to

distinguish schools that had taken effective steps to form working partnerships with parents, and through a series of case studies at these schools, the Johns Hopkins-based team was able to identify and describe a set of "promising partnership practices" (Epstein, 2001, p. 97). Thereafter, Epstein classified these practices under five headings with categories that designated activity types for her framework of school family partnerships. A sixth component, "collaborating with the community," was appended to this model in the early 1990s (Sanders & Epstein, 1999, p. 63) to expand the framework.

As it now stands, the school-family-community partnership model encompasses six activity types that Epstein (1995) characterized according to their broad functions:

> Type 1. Parenting: Helping families establish supportive home environments for children.
>
> Type 2. Communicating: Establishing two-way exchanges about school programs and children's progress.
>
> Type 3. Volunteering: Recruiting and organizing parent help at school, home, or other locations.
>
> Type 4. Learning at home: Providing information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum-related materials.
>
> Type 5. Decision making: Having parents from all backgrounds serve as representatives and leaders on school committees.

> Type 6. Collaborating with the community: Identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs (pp.702-703).

The available research suggests that each of these six activity types can be achieved through specific practices that have been reported within the prescriptive school partnership literature. As Epstein and Sheldon (2006) have observed, literally hundreds of practices have been accumulated over the years (p. 121) and schools that have initiated partnership programs are encouraged to select those that best meet their particular needs, resources, and circumstances and to create their own practices.

The process of identifying, evaluating, and disseminating information about various school partnership practices has unfolded inductively. The task of determining effectiveness of practices did not rely on a theory until 1987 when Epstein formulated a Theory of Overlapping Spheres that helps to explain why some partnerships work and how the six components of her activity taxonomy relate and reinforce each other. Her framework was grounded in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development and incorporated concepts from diverse educational, psychological, and social theories. In its simplest form Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres posits that students learn more and succeed at higher

levels when home, school, and community work together to support their learning and development (Epstein & Sanders 2006). The impact of each sphere is increased through its overlap with the other two spheres and these multiple domains impact student outcomes through multiple pathways.

Prior to Epstein and her associates' empirical and theoretical work, many public school officials recognized that parents and other community members have a positive influence on student educational outcomes, and their involvement should be encouraged. Epstein moved away from earlier models and altered the assumptions in her partnership model in several critical ways. Epstein's theory and the approach taken by the school partnership movement elevated the family from a subordinate role restricted to ancillary functions to the status of a co-equal partner. Moreover, according to Epstein, earlier approaches "focused mainly on the roles that parents needed to play and not the work that schools needed to do to organize strong programs to involve all families in their children's education" (2001, p. 39).

In the current school partnership model, the emphasis has shifted from the premise that parents should come forward to assist school personnel and toward the assumption that schools should engage in active out reach

efforts to involve all parents in their children's education. The school partnership model is intended to be comprehensive and integrated. Its leading advocates insist that a well-designed school partnership "operates as an organized *program* of structures, processes, and collaborative activities to help students succeed in every school, not as a set of fragmented activities for parents" (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, p. 122). In support of this claim, Epstein and her associates have reported strong correlations between practices in different activity categories: "Increased involvement in any one of the model's six activity clusters is strongly associated with increases in one or more of the other clusters" (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, p. 122). Consistent with these findings and congruent with Epstein's claim that they can be explained through a unified theoretical model, school-family-community partnerships are intended to be comprehensive in the sense that they should include some activities for all six involvement types (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004). Lastly, although the degree of family involvement in partnership school activities predicts gains in the performance and development of individual students, the specific activities and programs, taken as a whole, are expected to generate school-wide improvements. Consequently, partnership school

activities are thought to complement and facilitate a range of school improvement initiatives.

Since its emergence in the late 1980s, Epstein and her colleagues' school partnership model has served as the core of an educational reform movement that has evolved into a widely used blueprint for enhancing student learning and achieving school improvement goals. At the national level, the model stimulated the formation of a National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) along with a number of kindred organizations at regional and state-wide levels (Epstein, 2007). In 1997, the National Parent Teacher Association adopted the six-category activity type framework as the template for its parent-family involvement standards (Ellis & Hughes, 2002). The partnership model is explicitly contained in the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act and in other federal and state educational laws, including the State of New Hampshire's ED Rule 306. Most public schools in the United States are legally obliged to institute a school-family-community partnership program that adheres to the dimensions of Epstein's framework. More recently, *A Report on the Commission of the Whole Child* (2007) called for educating the whole child within the context of partnerships between schools and communities.

One of the acknowledged purposes of the partnership activity type model is that it provides an efficient means "to categorize activities and accumulate and synthesize results of studies so that knowledge grows and the results of research can be used by educators to improve practice" (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, p. 122). Early or "first wave" parental involvement studies, such as those covered by Henderson and Berla in their 1994 literature review, demonstrated that family involvement increases student academic performance. Several "second wave" research studies compared partnership with non-partnership schools or used pre/post partnership adoption study designs. This body of work found that engaging family and community members in comprehensive partnership programs has positive school-wide effects on student academic performance, classroom behavior, and school attendance (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, Mattingly, et al., 2002). Research conducted by the NNPS has also shown that the implementation of recommended involvement activities, as part of Epstein's comprehensive partnership framework, yields increased parent, family, and community participation in ways that support both individual student and school success (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006 p.122).

Despite the rapid dissemination of the school partnership model, published evaluations of the extent to which schools have actually utilized the involvement activities suggested in the school-family-community prescriptive literature are comparatively rare. Case studies and small-scale surveys concluded that the use of comprehensive partnership approaches does increase family, community involvement which, in turn, contributes to improvements in educational outcomes (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002; Quezada, 2003). But large-scale surveys have found, that even in schools that have initiated partnership programs, efforts have often been limited or otherwise deficient with regard to full implementation of Epstein's six activity types (Ellis & Hughes, 2002; Epstein, 2001; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004). In 2001, Epstein wrote that most NNPS schools "still do not conduct well-developed, comprehensive programs with all six types of involvement" (p. 491). Shortfalls tend to be reported for certain activity types and are more prevalent among schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities. There are difficulties in enlisting and sustaining parental/community engagement in activities that require extensive time and effort; however, there is also evidence that "family involvement programs are often viewed (by school personnel)

as an appendage rather than an integral part of school practice" (Christenson & Sheridan 2001, p. 58).

While some partnership implementation surveys relied on reports from school administrators and/or classroom teachers, a few studies used parent/family members to gauge the extent to which partnership activities are practiced. There is some evidence that teachers and parents hold divergent views about school-initiated activities aimed at inducing parental involvement (Barnard, 2004; Epstein, 2001; Lawson, 2003). Differences in the respective perceptions of teachers and parents concerning partnership activities are most pronounced on measures of Type 4 "learning at home" activities; parents report higher levels of engagement than classroom teachers attribute to them (Barnard, 2004; Ho & Willms 1996). By the same token, for some activity types such as communicating with parents, teachers may believe that they are providing sufficient information about students while parents remain dissatisfied and complain that teachers only communicate when their children display poor academic performance or exhibit disciplinary problems. This lack of agreement in teacher and parent perceptions of school partnership programs is embedded within and symptomatic of a larger problem. As Epstein noted, after reviewing partnership

program evaluations carried out in the early 1990s, "one of the most consistent results is that teachers have very different views of parents than parents have of themselves" (2001, p. 44).

Several researchers have presented evidence that suggests parent perceptions of school-family-involvement programs have a powerful influence on parents' behavior toward them. In 1992, Epstein found that the strongest predictor of actual parental involvement at inner city, elementary and middle schools was the belief that the school had a well-established program to facilitate their engagement (2001, p. 212). Parents hold the perception that schools do not welcome their intrusion into the educational process and this is but one of the barriers to parental involvement identified in a study by Christenson and Sheridan (2001).

At the conclusion of their 2005 study, Hoover-Dempsey and her colleagues noted that parental decisions about their involvement in schools are heavily affected by their perceptions that schools want them to take part in the education of their children (p.123). Similarly, in a sample of low income, African-American parents, Overstreet, Devine, Bevans, and Efreom (2005) reported that the strongest determinant of parent involvement in schools was

the perceived receptivity of the school. There is reason to believe that some parents are deterred from engaging in school partnership activities by a lack of adequate knowledge about them, by negative perceptions concerning their capacity to play a significant role in the education of their children, and/or by skepticism about the "invitations" to participate extended to them by school administrators or their children's teachers. Schools that initiate partnership programs or involvement activities without conveying their potential benefits to parents will not realize the gains associated with the implementation and will not overcome negative perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes.

To the best of this researcher's knowledge, Schulte's (2004) investigation is the only study to have compared teacher and parent perceptions of the extent to which school-family-community partnership activities have actually occurred at elementary and secondary school levels. As in this study, Schulte's survey sample was comprised of teachers and parents from elementary and secondary schools divided into four study groups. All of the subjects in the sample either taught at or had children enrolled in schools that belonged to the South Dakota Coalition of Schools, an organization whose members

implemented partnership activities. The primary purpose of Schulte's study was to determine the degree of congruence/ divergence in perceptions of partnership activity usage among the four groups. After analyzing parent and teacher responses to a forced-response instrument, Schulte found significant differences in the response patterns of elementary and secondary school teachers as well as between elementary teachers and elementary school parents in their perceptions of partnership activities at their respective schools. Moreover, the study's results indicated that the schools had not implemented several involvement activities; particularly those in category Type 4, learning-at-home involvement activities. Based on this finding, Schulte stated that "efforts by schools and teachers are not being made to create an 'extended hand' to families outside the environment of the school where the environment cannot be controlled" (p. 94). Since engagement in Type 4 activities tends "to strongly predict the use of all other types of involvement" (Epstein, 2001, p. 94), this deficiency may have negatively affected parental perceptions of and/or involvement in other aspects of school partnership programs.

The fact that there were conflicting perceptions of elementary school parents and teachers about some

partnership activities is significant and this has negative implications for success in establishing partnerships. The lack of full agreement in the perceptions of elementary and secondary school teachers may suggest there is a variation in program content between schools or a difference in knowledge of partnership activities possessed by these two groups of classroom educators.

To determine the degree of convergence/divergence in the perceptions of parents and teachers in New Hampshire public schools regarding the extent to which involvement activities, presented in Epstein's partnership framework, are being implemented in elementary and secondary schools a self-report survey questionnaire was used to collect data from parents and teachers. The data were used to answer the same research questions that guided Schulte's study.

1. Do significant differences exist between elementary and secondary school teachers' perceptions in each of the following activities:
    - 1.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,
    - 1.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,
    - 1.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

1.4 students' learning at home,

1.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

1.6 collaborating with the community?

2. Do significant differences exist between elementary and secondary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities:

2.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,

2.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,

2.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

2.4 students' learning at home,

2.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

2.6 collaborating with the community?

3. Do significant differences exist between elementary school teachers' and elementary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities:

3.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,

3.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,

3.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

3.4 students' learning at home,

3.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

3.6 collaborating with the community?

4.0 Do significant differences exist between secondary school teachers' and secondary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities:

4.1. helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,

4.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,

4.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

4.4 students' learning at home,

4.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

4.6 collaborating with the community?

## Study Design

This dissertation is a quantitative, descriptive analysis research study that measured the degree of variance in the perceptions of four groups of participants

concerning phenomena that are integral to educational practice and an educational policy. Secondarily, the results of this study may clarify the extent to which various "best practice" activities and/or activity types in Epstein's framework are implemented at schools in the study's sample. The purpose of this study is limited to description. The large body of theoretical and empirical literature may furnish a way for explaining the study's findings but the objective is to report the findings sought (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Participant errors and/or biases may be present in the data that were gathered and measured for this study but this did not discredit its findings. It was anticipated that limitations on the subjects' perspectives influenced their responses (Gay & Airasian, 2003). This research study employed a survey method and used an instrument that gathered data which was authored at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in conjunction with Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University and used by Schulte (2004). The data were gathered from four distinct groups of participants and the recruitment procedure assured that each group had an equal probability of being chosen.

## Description of the Data-Gathering Instrument

The study's data-gathering instrument is a forced-response survey device constructed by researchers at Northwest Educational Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in conjunction with researchers at the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). It was used by Schulte (2004) for his study of parent and teacher perceptions of school partnerships. As in Schulte's investigation, two versions of the instrument were used in this study, one addressed to teachers (see Appendix A) and the other to parents (see Appendix B). Other than slight differences in wording and in the items included in a basic demographic background section, the content of the two versions is identical.

Both forms of the survey instrument encompass seven sections. The final section of each version asked respondents to indicate categorical data that was used to classify the participants by study group and to confirm their eligibility to participate in the study. The remaining six sections are based on an instrument *titled Measure of School, Family and Community Partnerships* developed by Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University in conjunction with Karen Salinas and her associates at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

(Salinas, Epstein, Sanders, Davis, & Aldersebaes, 2000, pp. 25-31). Each section is respectively dedicated to the six activity types-Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making and Collaborating with the Community-embodied in the National PTA's partnership standards. Seven to fourteen best practice activities drawn from the relevant literature on school partnerships appear under each heading. Schulte used the same instrument and scoring rubric but added a seventh section-demographics-in his 2004 study.

Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency/ extent to which each activity is practiced in the school at which they work or in which one or more of their children is currently enrolled. The response categories for all of the items in this device are arranged as a five point, Likert-type scales range of (1) not occurring, (2) rarely, (3) occasionally, (4) frequently, and (5) extensively.

## Sampling Universe and Study Group Formation Procedures

To achieve randomly selected samples for the four study groups, the researcher followed a multi-stage procedure. The sample for the study was derived from a population of elementary and secondary public schools, in districts with grades kindergarten through twelve within the district. The researcher first determined the broad

boundaries of the sampling universe from which all study participants were drawn. Using the 2008 alphabetically-arranged roster of all public school districts in the State of New Hampshire, the researcher identified those districts that had configurations of elementary (K-8) and secondary (9-12) schools within the district. The first 50 school districts that conformed to this pattern were eligible for participation in the study. One elementary school (K-8) and one secondary school (9-12) from each district were identified to participate in the study. When there were multiple elementary or secondary schools, in a K-12 district, a table of random numbers was used to select an elementary and a secondary school for the study. The researcher then sent a letter and an email message to the superintendents of these 50 school districts to briefly explain the study's purpose and to seek permission to conduct the study in the superintendent's school district. Superintendents representing forty two K-12 school districts approved parent and teacher participation in the study.

## Study Hypotheses

Based on a review of the relevant empirical literature on parental involvement and school-family-community partnerships, the researcher anticipated that there would

be significant differences in the quantitatively aggregated perceptions of the four groups concerning one or more of the activities that appear within the study's instrument used for data gathering. To facilitate the process of statistical analysis, the study's four hypotheses are presented as null hypotheses:

1. There will be no significant differences between the perceptions of elementary school teachers and the perceptions of secondary school teachers about the extent that any of the exemplary activities in any of the six categories have been implemented.

2. There will be no significant differences between the perceptions of parents of elementary school students and the perceptions of parents of secondary school students about the extent that any of the exemplary activities in any of the six categories have been implemented.

3. There will be no significant differences between the perceptions of parents of elementary school students and the perceptions of elementary school teachers about the extent to which exemplary activities in the six categories of Epstein's framework are being implemented at their respective schools.

4. There will be no significant differences between the perceptions of parents of secondary school students and the perceptions of secondary school teachers about the extent that any of the exemplary activities in any of the six categories have been implemented.

## Rationale for the Study Design

This study revisits Schulte's (2004) dissertation and the study design faithfully embodies the central features of his work. This researcher elected to conduct a replication study as a consequence of the researcher's

appreciation of the scholarly value of replicating social science research works as discussed by Campbell and Jackson (1979), Lamal (1991), Rosenthal (1990) Sidman (1960), Smith (1970) and Sommer and Sommer (1983). Replication studies can make their own independent contributions to theory construction and testing and can extend empirical knowledge bases. The findings of replication studies can be directly compared to those of previously conducted works, and they can be used to test the reliability of the studies on which they are based.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, Schulte's study is the only work to have compared the perceptions of partnership activity frequencies that discriminate between elementary and secondary schools. The researcher presumed that the potential value of replicating this unique work was greater than that of replicating a study within a topic that has already been investigated by several researchers (Lustig & Andersen, 1987).

This study utilized a survey methodology to elicit information from a geographically disparate population drawn through probabilistic means from a broad cross-section of school districts within the State of New Hampshire. This study stands in contrast to the bulk of the current body of school partnership research which is

dominated by single or multiple case studies that have been chosen by researchers as "best practice" schools and characterized by quantitative investigations of narrowly-defined subject groups, e.g., parents of "at risk" students. This quantitative investigation is designed to generate descriptive statistical information.

Finally, the researcher's decision to restrict the sampling universe to public schools in the State of New Hampshire was grounded in an awareness of a statewide mandate that requires all public schools to develop and implement policies that promote "strong family and community partnerships" (New Hampshire Department of Education, 2005). Under ED Rule 306 of the State of New Hampshire, public school districts are directed to institute and maintain partnership programs aligned to the six standards delineated by the National PTA, which in turn were derived directly from Epstein's framework of involvement types. All of the schools from which the study participants were drawn are required to implement programs that include involvement activities reported in the prescriptive school partnership literature that are identical or similar to those used by Schulte in his study's survey instrument.

## Data Analysis

The responses of participants in all four of the study's groups were entered as raw numerical data into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer database for descriptive and inferential analysis. Chi-square analyses were used to explore overall differences between the perceptions of partnership activity usage by respondent groups, and this was followed by pair-wise comparisons between the responses of the four groups. Contingent upon the response rate and distribution of the responses, it was necessary to collapse responses from the five categories into three categories by combining the rarely/occasionally responses into a single category and the frequently/extensively responses into a second category while maintaining the not occurring category.

In reporting the study's results, response frequencies and the percent of total responses were presented for each response category along with pattern declarations. The composite analysis in the presentation of results, for each of Epstein's partnership activity types, is a summation of all the responses to questions (items) in each category and provides data that indicate the total number of response frequencies, the percent of total responses, and the pattern of declarations in each

activity type (Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making and Collaborating with the Community).

Chi-square analysis measuring statistical differences between respondent groups determined if the response rates within each category were significantly different (statistically) from the overall response rate. If the chi-square statistic was statistically significant, based on the alpha level of $p = < 0.05$, then the sample survey suggests the null hypothesis should be rejected and in fact, the group membership does affect perceptions of the question of interest. The criterion for statistical significance was set based on the alpha level of $p = <0.05$, indicating that the probability of a significant difference due to chance is less than 1 in 20. In the presentation of results, any value that is considered statistically large enough to deem it significant is based on the alpha level of 0.05 has an asterisk presented next to it. The data are presented textually and in tables.

The demographic responses obtained from each teacher included descriptive data about the level of the teacher's school assignment, the size of the school district, the socioeconomic level of the community and the regional characteristic of the community in which the teacher is

employed. The descriptive data obtained from each parent included the size of their child's school district, the level of their child's school, the socioeconomic level of the community, and the regional characteristic of the community. Demographic data concerning the grade level of each school were used to make pair-wise comparisons of elementary parents and teachers as well as secondary level parents and teachers.

An overall representation of the respondents was reported and an analysis, similar to that of the original respondent group analysis, was completed to study the responses (perceptions) across demographic groups, regardless of original group designation, to determine if demographic characteristics influenced respondents' perceptions. Thus, for district enrollment size, socio-economic level of the community, regional characteristics of the community (target community), and level of the school (elementary or secondary), responses were presented across groups that distinguish among all of the response categories. The demographic data were analyzed and reported for response frequencies and percent of total responses along with patterns of declaration across groups. Statistical analyses were reported using chi-square

analyses for each demographic group, regardless of original group designation.

## Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of terms that were used in this study:

*Community:* Encompasses all individuals and institutions, in and out of school, that have a stake in the success of children in school and in the well-being of families and children. This may include schools, families, neighborhood groups, businesses, libraries, local government, religious organizations, parks and recreation departments, law enforcement offices, social services and health agencies, and others who serve children and families (Epstein, 2001).

*Elementary Teachers:* Classroom teachers certified by the state of New Hampshire to teach grades K-8 in a public school system.

*Elementary School*: Under Section 189:25 of the New Hampshire School Administrative Rules, an elementary school is any school approved by the State Board of Education in which the subjects taught are those prescribed by the State Board for the grades kindergarten through 8 of the public schools. However, a separate organization consisting of grades 4 through 8, or any grouping of these grades may be

recognized as a middle school and so approved by the State Board.

*Family-School Partnership:* Family-school partnerships focus on the relationship between home, school, and community and how parents and teachers work together to promote the social and academic development of children (Epstein, 2001).

*Parent Involvement Activities or Programs:* Refer to a series of events, organizing efforts, and workshops offered through the auspices of the school and its staff.

*Parents:* Adults who play an important role in a child's family and school life including other adults such as grandparents, aunts, step-parents, and guardians who carry out the primary responsibility for a child's development, well-being and education (National PTA,1998).

*Secondary Teachers/High School Teachers*: Classroom teachers certified by the state of New Hampshire to teach grades 9-12 in a public school system.

*Secondary School/High School:* Under section 194:23 of the New Hampshire School Administrative Rules, the term secondary/ high school means a public school or public academy comprising a span of grades beginning with the next grade following an approved elementary, middle or junior high school as defined in RSA 189:25 and ending with grade

12. In this study a high school consists of students enrolled in grades 9-12.

*Six Types of Involvement:* The model that provides a framework of six types of activities to build and sustain a comprehensive program of family, school and community partnerships. It includes (1) Parenting, (2) Communicating, (3) Volunteering, (4) Learning at Home, (5) Decision Making, and (6) Collaborating with the Community (Epstein, 2001).

## Study Limitations

It was anticipated that several features of the use of the study's instrument and the sampling procedures would limit the validity and reliability of the study findings. The overall content validity of the instrument that was used to gather data as well as the validity of its individual items was not reported by Schulte. In his dissertation, Schulte (2004) did not provide any reliability data for the instrument he used. He did use the instrument that Epstein, Salinas and their associates at the NNPS and NWREL developed under the title *Measure of School Family and Community Partnerships.* In a personal communication to this researcher (August 6, 2008), Dr. Epstein expressed confidence that scales measuring the six activities in her framework possess a high degree of

internal reliability, and noted that they have been used in a number of partnership evaluations, including research studies conducted by doctoral candidates.

The sample encompassed a total of 336 prospective participants. However, the final sample size could not be confirmed in advance of the study. Given that the selection and recruitment of teachers and parents took place through a multi-stage procedure that relied on individuals other than the researcher, the response rates for the final sample and for each of the study's four groups were comparatively low. The small size of the survey sample and of the study's four groups limited the validity and reliability of its findings.

The study tapped into participant perceptions of partnership involvement activity use that may or may not have reflected actual implementation. This limited the validity of any findings concerning implementation. In terms of the study's primary purpose, it was possible that participants checked responses that differed from their actual perceptions of how frequently the activities were used at their school. When completing the study the participants may have been affected by social and other types of bias.

Lastly, the study's sample was confined to public schools in the State of New Hampshire that conform to a pre-specified grade configuration. New Hampshire is a small state that is predominantly rural, and has relatively small percentages of racial/ethnic minority group students and students from households with incomes below the federal poverty line. Moreover, New Hampshire has a long-standing tradition of "home rule" or district-wide control over its public schools that distinguishes it from states in which educational policy is determined to a greater extent by state officials. Due to these characteristics, the generalization of the study's findings to schools in other states is problematic.

## Study Significance

It is expected that the study findings may contribute to relevant theory, empirical knowledge, and school partnership practice. Quantitative research studies are still under-represented in this field and this study should add to the empirical knowledge on school partnership programs. The study may furnish information that is useful in the design and implementation of school-family-community partnerships. In addition to highlighting activities and activity types that require additional attention, the study's findings may indicate that some involvement

activities that administrators believe to be occurring at a satisfactory level are not perceived as such by parents. Conversely, the findings may suggest that some involvement activities that educational officials perceive as being weakly implemented at schools are seen by parents as being satisfactory. Overall, the study's findings may assist school decision-makers in designing and implementing more effective partnership programs.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

As Joyce Epstein and her colleagues asserted in the *School, Family, and Community Partnerships* handbook, "there is no topic in education on which there is greater agreement than the need for parental involvement" (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, & Van Voorhis, 2002, p. 1). Epstein and her associates at Johns Hopkins University Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships have been at the forefront of research on how parental or family involvement in schools influences student learning, development and academic achievement.

During the past decade, much of this work was completed in conjunction with a number of schools and school districts that form the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). The findings of NNPS, and of many other studies, demonstrate that "the quality of relations between schools and families plays an integral role in student success" (Mattingly, et al., 2002, p. 349). Literature reviews (Fishel & Ramirez, 2005; Henderson &

Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mattingly, et al., 2002) support the associations between parental/family engagement in schools and a variety of student outcomes. Also, recent meta-analyses of quantitative results from across studies reported significant size effects (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005, 2007). Both large-scale surveys and single-site empirical investigations have shown that when schools and parents/families work together, general student academic performance is greatly enhanced (Barnard, 2004; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow & Fendrich, 1999; Redding, et al., 2004; Simon, 2001).

Additionally, there appears to be a strong relationship between specific types of parental involvement and student performance within particular subject areas, such as in reading/literacy: (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins & Weiss, 2006; Epstein, 1995; Yap & Enoki, 1995) and mathematics (Balli, Demo, & Wedman, 1998; Catsambis, 2001; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Moreover, the impact of partnerships between schools and parents extends beyond academic achievement; it encompasses student classroom behavior (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002; Sheldon, 2004) and school attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004).

The research documenting the effects of parental involvement is significant. However, there has been a more important contribution to the field by Epstein through her re-definition of parental involvement in schools and development of her theoretical model and accompanying analytical framework (Fishel & Ramirez, 2005, p. 373).

Even before Epstein and her colleagues began their work in the early-1980s, school officials recognized that parents have a constructive part to play in their children's education. They developed limited approaches that focused on distinct ways parents could support the schools that their children attended. But as Epstein (2001) stated, these approaches "focused mainly on the roles that parents needed to play and not the work that schools needed to do to organize strong programs to involve all families in their children's education" (p. 39). Epstein's "Theory of Overlapping Spheres" changed the position of student families from an auxiliary role to that of an equal partner with schools. The community was added, operating as the third sphere that contributes to learning and development.

In conjunction with the model, Epstein identified six types of parental/community involvement in school-family-community partnerships. This will be discussed at greater

length later in this review. Epstein's framework was adopted by the NNPS and consists of the following elements:

> Type 1. Parenting: Helping all families establish supportive home environments for children.
>
> Type 2. Communicating: Establishing two-way exchanges about school programs and children's progress.
>
> Type 3. Volunteering: Recruiting and organizing parent help at school, home, or other locations.
>
> Type 4. Learning at home: Providing information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum-related materials.
>
> Type 5. Decision-making: Having parents from all backgrounds serve as representatives and leaders on school committees.
>
> Type 6. Collaborating with the community: Identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs (Epstein 1995, pp. 702-703).

There are three aspects of this framework that require clarification. First, the emphasis is on what schools should do to increase parental and community involvement. Each type of involvement in Epstein's model involves active school outreach initiatives. Second, the six types of involvement are considered the basis for a unified, comprehensive partnership program. Each type of involvement interacts with and reinforces one or more of the other five components. Third, in addition to individual student outcomes, the specific types of involvement and the program as a whole are intended to generate school-wide

improvements. Epstein argued that objectives to increase involvement should be linked to school improvement goals (2001, p. 39).

The NNPS's approach to school-family-community partnerships is grounded in five findings that have been enumerated by Epstein (2001):

> (1) students do better in school if their parents are involved in various ways;
>
> (2) more parents become involved when schools establish and conduct good programs of partnership;
>
> (3) schools can be assisted by federal, state, district, and school leadership and policies to develop strong, responsive programs;
>
> (4) research and evaluation activities can identify differences between strong and weak policies, good and bad practices: and,
>
> (5) the results of many studies have produced a research-based framework that should enable any school to plan and implement practices for the six major types of involvement, including practices to help meet specific goals for school improvement (pp. 67-68).

Also, the framework includes collaboration by schools with the community as a Type 6 involvement. This involvement, according to Epstein, has an effect on the experiences of individual students and it strengthens the school's capacity to promote development, learning, and academic achievement for all of its students.

Epstein's framework is a valuable instrument for planning, organizing, and evaluating partnership program

activities but it does not specify what those activities should be or the best way to implement them at a particular school. The task of selecting specific activities in each of the six categories is the responsibility of Action Teams for Partnership (ATPs) which are comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, and community partners working at the school level (Epstein et. al., 2002, pp. 84).

To assist teams with the selection of activities, ATPs can consult a large body of prescriptive literature (Ellis & Hughes, 2002) developed by the NNPS and other national, regional and state partnership organizations. Epstein's (2001) *School, Family, and Community Partnerships*, provides a variety of recommendations. The Handbook (Epstein et al., 2002) furnishes literally "hundreds of activities and approaches" that have been implemented at NNPS schools (p. 43). The 2002 handbook contains several "re-definitions" of the six involvement types and these reflect the way practitioners have adapted the activities. Additionally, specific core activities were identified for each of the six involvement clusters in the framework.

In 2006 Epstein and Sheldon surveyed the research on school, family, and community partnerships and stated that scholars have used various methods to investigate the nature and the effects of programs and family involvement

at different grade levels in schools serving diverse communities (pp. 117-118). In their estimation, however, "research on the effects of family involvement on student outcomes is currently a mile wide and an inch deep" (p.128). Studies of parental involvement effects have a number of limitations (Mattingly, et al., 2002), and many have been conducted with parents whose involvement is "spontaneous," without any systematic effort of the part of the schools that their children attend to elicit their involvement (Desforges, 2003).

What is noteworthy in the literature is that few assessments have been published regarding the extent to which schools have actually used the involvement activities presented in the school-family-community literature. This is true for schools that currently participate in the NNPS and for schools that participate in other "partnership"/ parental involvement coalitions. Some researchers (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002; Quezada, 2003) reported that there are schools that have followed Epstein's framework and successfully conduct activities in the six types of parental/community involvement. However, others found that many schools have been deficient in one or more of Epstein's six activity types (Ellis & Hughes, 2002; Epstein, 2001; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004).

What has been reported thus far is that the implementation of parental involvement programs at high schools appears to be weaker than at elementary and middle schools (Epstein, 2007; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Sanders & Simon, 2002). Also, there is considerable evidence that teachers and parents hold divergent perceptions of school-initiated activities to induce parental involvement (Barnard, 2004; Epstein, 2001; Lawson, 2003). When Schulte (2004) used a survey that asked elementary school parents, high school parents, elementary school teachers, and high school teachers to rate the extent of their school's parent-community involvement activities he found substantial variance among the four groups. He also observed that all the schools in his investigation did not include strong implementation of several prominent involvement activities even though the schools had some level of commitment to school-family-community partnerships.

The remainder of this literature review is organized into two main sections that are relevant to this study. The first covers the historical evolution of school-family-community relations and of Epstein's work, Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres, Epstein's involvement type framework and organizational structures that activate

school-family-community partnerships. The second section of the literature review surveys the findings of studies and includes an overview of which parents are most likely to be involved in their children's schools, common barriers to parental involvement, the effects of parental involvement and program implementation assessments.

## Evolution of Epstein's Work

In her book, Epstein (2001) remarked that, until the latter part of the nineteenth century, parents and community members directly controlled the activities of the public schools that their children attended. Most schools were exceedingly small by today's standards and there was a great deal of interaction between educational professionals on the one hand, and parents-community members, on the other.

However, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "a different pattern of family and school relations emerged. Increasingly, the school began to distance itself from the home by emphasizing the teachers' special knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy" (Epstein, 2001, p. 24). Schools grew in size, developed bureaucratic structures, were organized into districts and were subjected to statewide standards. At the same time, professionalism among teachers spread; licensing and

certification requirements were imposed; curricula became increasingly diversified; and specialized staff assumed prominent roles in decisions affecting students. The school began to function as an entity unto itself.

Parents were expected to instill positive attitudes and norms supporting good classroom behavior in their children, but learning and intellectual development was assumed to be under the control of educators. From time to time dissenting views arose. However, the predominant view held by educational policy-makers and school officials was that the real control of public education for American school children was in the hands of school administrators and school boards, with little input solicited from teachers and parents (Vos, 1992).

In the 1960s the topic of parental involvement in schools gained importance. Head Start and Follow Through programs in preschool and in the early elementary grades were established to close the gap dividing middle class children and children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes. For example, Head Start emphasized the important roles parents play in early childhood development and it mandated parent participation in program decisions (Pigott & Israel, 2005, pp. 79-80). Shortly after Head Start began, the Coleman Committee issued its landmark report on

*Equality of educational opportunity* (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfield, & York, 1966).

Coleman et al. concluded that factors found in student homes, rather than in the quality of schools, accounted for a substantial share of the variance in student academic achievement (Henderson & Mapp 2002, p. 203). The importance of home environment and parental activities for learning outcomes gained significance. During the 1970s, the school restructuring movement emphasized site-based decision making and this revived the call for greater parental and local community involvement in public schools Epstein, 2001, p. 40). Many of the reforms undertaken during this period focused primarily on teachers and school practices and were not "overwhelmingly successful" (Christensen & Sheridan, 2001, p. 9).

In the 1980s, as declining student scores on standardized tests indicated that America was at risk, "family-school relations changed again in response to increased demands from the public for better, more accountable schools" (Epstein, 2001, p. 24). The goal of increasing parental involvement in schools gained importance with the ongoing school accountability movement (Mattingly et al., 2002, p. 459). Most recently the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 identified parental

involvement as one of six targeted areas for school reform (Christenson, 2004). Under NCLB, school eligibility for Title 1 funding requires parental involvement. Epstein and Sheldon (2006) have commented, that the law requires that all families be included, "not just those that are currently involved or easiest to reach" (2006, p. 128). Increased parental or family involvement is now inscribed in federal and state school reform legislation. Although NCLB and other school accountability acts mandate greater parental/family involvement, they do not define what the term "parental involvement" means nor do they specify courses of action for encouraging it (Mitchell, 2008, p. 1).

It is from this historical background that the over-arching theory, analytical framework, and supporting research for school-family-community partnerships evolved through the efforts of Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University.

*Epstein's original framework of partnership* involvement types focused on school-family interaction. In the early 1990s this framework was expanded to include collaboration with community organizations (type 6) such as businesses, universities, government agencies, and non-profit groups (Sanders & Epstein, 1999, p. 63). This

expansion was based on studies conducted by the California State Board of Education. Epstein et al. found that partnerships with community organizations have a direct influence on school improvement efforts and these partnerships predict family-school involvement, student academic achievement, and improved student behavior (Epstein, 2001, p. 138). The scope of work on school-family-community partnerships expanded to the national level during this time. Four years later, the Educate America Act identified increased school efforts to involve parents as one of its Goals 2000 objectives (Schulte, 2004, p. 10).

By the early 1990s, the goal of increasing parental and community involvement had been adopted at federal and state levels as a way to enhance school performance. The NNPS was formed to assist schools, districts, and states in developing comprehensive programs of school, family, and community partnerships in conjunction with school improvement initiatives (Sanders, 2006, p. xii). Historical forces contributed to the school-family-community partnership model but it is grounded in a set of theoretical concepts that Epstein synthesized into her "Theory of Overlapping Spheres" and the involvement type

framework that she constructed as a guide to research and practice.

## Theory of Epstein's Overlapping Spheres

According to Epstein and Sheldon (2006), the Theory of Overlapping Spheres integrates and extends ecological, educational, psychological, and sociological theories and perspectives on social organization and relationships (p.119). First proposed by Epstein in 1987, the theory is based on an ecological approach to human development put forth in Urie Bronfenbrenner's work (1979), the socio-cultural perspective on the relationship between development and learning associated with Lev Vygotsky, and James Coleman's conception of how social capital influences student school experience and academic achievement.

Several scholars have pointed out (and Epstein herself agrees), the template for the Theory of Overlapping Spheres was formed from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001, p. 39). Bronfenbrenner stated that human development must be understood by taking actual life settings into account and that these settings are nested within a series of systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. From the standpoint of education, the most immediate system influencing human development is the microsystem, which is

comprised of face-to-face interactions between individuals such as parents and teachers. The mesosystem involves channels of communication between schools and families. The phenomenological meanings that individuals acquire through interactions within and across systems result in enhancement of activities, roles, and relationships based on the degree to which they are experienced and perceived similarly across multiple contexts. For example, the meaning that a student attaches to his or her role as a learner is determined through interactions such as child-parent exchanges and these are influenced by the quality of interactions between the school and the family.

Epstein's model also used the principles of socio-cultural developmental theory brought forth by the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. From Vygotsky's perspective, development and learning are mutually interactive; learning can actually advance cognitive development (Carlton & Winsler, 1999). For example, the learning that a child acquires in the home has a powerful influence upon his or her experiences at school. Thus, cognitive development within the formal educational setting (the school) is conditional upon the degree of cultural compatibility between the school and the home environment.

Finally, Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres reflects the concept of "social capital" as applied to public schooling by James Coleman (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 204). In a highly influential essay, Coleman (1987) asserted that much of the variance in children's academic achievement can be explained by differences in the social capital that their respective families possess. Social capital is determined by an individual's or a group's access to institutions and to individuals who have the capacity to furnish valued resources. Among low income families social capital tends to be low when compared to middle income suburban families. Schools can provide resources to children and can supply disadvantaged families with resources that they cannot obtain from institutions or individuals to equalize social capital.

In its simplest form, Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres states that students learn more and succeed at higher levels when home, school, and community work together to support students' learning and development (Epstein & Sanders 2006, p. 87). Epstein has depicted her model in the form of three spheres-school, family, and community-that exist as distinct structures but that nevertheless display overlap with each other.

"The proposed model of overlapping spheres," Epstein observed, "assumes that there are mutual interests and influences of families and schools that can be more or less successfully promoted by the policies and programs of the organizations and the actions and attitudes of the individuals in those organizations" (2001, p. 31). Partnerships among schools, families and communities provide support and social resources to students, reinforce the importance of education among all participants (including students) and contribute to a holistic environment for the child's development (Mattingly et.al., 2002, p. 552).

In an essay that appeared in a 1995 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, Epstein stressed that it is through close and frequent interactions among family members, school personnel and individuals from the community, that students receive consistent messages about the value of learning. The consistency of this message enhances the meaning that students attach to the learning process and increases their motivation. According to Redding et al. (2004), interaction between the family and the school also exerts a positive influence on the attitudes and behaviors of both parents and teachers.

> As parents interact with their children's schooling in different ways, at different points in time, with a consistent message as to their significance in the process, family attention to learning increases and gains a focus. As teachers enlist the support of parents in learning, in different ways at different points in time, they are reminded of the advantages of such alliances, and the child's learning increasingly becomes the focus of their interactions with parents. The cumulative effects of more frequent and higher quality interactions among teachers and parents are a greater reservoir of trust and respect, increased social capital for children, and a school community more supportive of each child's school success (p. 6).

Research studies conducted by Epstein et al. found that increases in family participation in any one of the six involvement clusters is associated with increases in the others (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, p. 122). It is also important to recognize that while activities designed to activate each involvement type will vary from school to school, school-family-community partnerships are intended to be comprehensive in the sense that they should include activities for all six involvement types (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004, p. 12)

## Framework of Epstein's Involvement Activities

The framework with its six involvement clusters in Epstein's activity framework for school-family-community partnerships perform multiple functions. First, the framework provides a structure through which schools can plan and organize activities to involve parents and

community members in the education of their students (Epstein, 1995, p.705). Second, Epstein emphasizes "the framework of six types of involvement provides an efficient way in which to categorize activities and accumulate and synthesize results of studies so that knowledge grows and the results of research can be used by educators to improve practice" (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, p. 122). It is a useful means for analyzing and reporting research results. Lastly, the framework can serve as an assessment device for use in the evaluation of an established partnership. For example, it can assist in identifying those areas that require remedial attention.

In her framework of involvement types, Epstein designated Type 1 involvement as activities that support "parenting." In this category, schools are called on to furnish parents with information that will help them in acquiring effective parenting/child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and establishing home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Type 1 activities also provide channels through which school personnel can gain a better understanding of a family's cultural background and the aspirations that they hold for their children. Workshops conducted on school grounds are one of the most frequently

mentioned activities within this involvement category (Epstein, 2007, p. 19) and may be devoted to such topics as health, nutrition, peer pressure, bullying, substance abuse, or premature sexual behavior.

Communications between schools and families constitute Type 2 involvement in Epstein's framework. Annual parent-teacher conferences, school newsletters, report cards accompanied by portfolios of student schoolwork are among the most frequently mentioned forms of communication within the partnership literature related to type involvement. Communication must be bi-directional. Schools should actively encourage parents to express their views through periodic satisfaction surveys and to pose questions or voice their concerns with teachers (Epstein, 2007, pp. 19-20). Research shows that reliance on written material as a primary source of communication is *not* sufficient to establish and maintain effective school-family communications. Many schools are increasing their use of web-based technologies to encourage two way communications between families and teachers, counselors, and administrators (Epstein, et al., 2002, Chrispeels, Gonzales & Arellano, 2004, p. 20, Costantini & Montagne, 2008).

Parents can volunteer to perform a host of activities that support students and schools. Type 3 activities

facilitate this type of involvement through the identification, recruitment and training of volunteers. Parents may present classroom talks about their careers, hobbies, talents, and cultural backgrounds; they may serve as mentors, tutors and coaches; they may assist in organizing and implementing special school events; and they may perform functions to control absenteeism or improve school safety (Epstein, 2007, p. 20; Burke, 2001, p. 47). Partnership schools do not simply wait for parents to come forward. They conduct annual surveys that ask parents about the talents and experiences that they can bring into schools. In some instances, parents may not be able to engage in volunteer work due to scheduling conflicts or childcare obligations. Schools can respond to these constraints through flexible scheduling or by providing special parent/family rooms in which other volunteers are able to look after younger children through flexible scheduling.

Under the category of Type 4 "learning at home" involvement, parents are encouraged to take an active part in their children's schoolwork and academic careers. For parents of children in lower elementary school grades this includes shared reading sessions in which parents enhance the literacy skills of their sons and daughters by reading

along with them. Parents can establish and enforce rules for the completion of homework assignments, and take an active part with their children in academic goal setting (Epstein, 2001, p. 454). One of the most common forms of Type 4 activity is the use of "interactive" homework that requires students to discuss their assignments with parents or for parents/family members take part in the actual completion of homework (Epstein, 2007, p. 20). Mattingly et al. (2002) reviewed 41 parental involvement studies and noted the most common activity used by schools to promote learning at home was some type of interactive homework (p. 56).

Type 5 involvement in Epstein's framework consists of activities that involve parent participation in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through an active PTA/PTO, through service on various types of committees and councils, and through working as advocates for the school and public education at large. Activities in this category include participation on school improvement councils or Action Teams for Partnership (ATPs) that are working on with school-family-community partnerships, the development/review of mission statements, or participation in specialized panels (curriculum improvement, student behavior codes, safety committees, conflict resolution

forums, etc.). These groups may have independent power or they may function as advisory committees (Epstein 2007, p. 20). It is essential that schools make a strong effort to include parents/family members from all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic segments of the community in Type 5 activities (Schulte 2004, p. 33). As Epstein observed in her discussion of Type 5 involvement, "most families do *not* want to serve on committees or in leadership roles, but most *do* want parents' voices represented in school decisions" (2001, p. 465).

Collaboration with the community was added to Epstein's original framework as Type 6 involvement. Under this category, schools draw on and coordinate resources with businesses, cultural, civic, and religious organizations, senior citizen groups, colleges and universities, government agencies, and other associations to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development (Epstein, 2007, p. 20). According to Sanders (2006), community involvement may be defined as "connections between schools and community individuals, organizations, and businesses that are forged to directly or indirectly promote students' social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development" (2006, p. xi). A primary rationale for Type 6 involvement stems

from the fact that schools, especially those in low SES neighborhoods, frequently require additional resources (Sanders, 2003, p. 162).

From this brief overview it is apparent that while there are some core activities for each of Epstein's six involvement types, the range of initiatives that schools can adopt to build school-family-community partnerships is enormous. Literally hundreds of specific practices have been reported in the literature (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, p. 121) and as Epstein (1995) has cautioned, even "award winning" promising partnership activities are not feasible at every school. Decision-makers at the school or district level must determine whether and how partnership activities can be used effectively to enhance student development, learning, and achievement.

## Partnership Action Teams for School-Family-Community

According to Epstein (2007), extensive research and field work with elementary, middle and high schools reveals that there are four key components for effective and sustainable programs of family and community involvement. They are (1) action teams for partnerships; (2) the six types of involvement framework; (3) action plans that are linked to goals for student success; and (4) evaluation and ongoing improvement (Epstein, 2007, p. 18). As Mattingly

and her colleagues observed in their review of the literature on programs to promote parental involvement in schools, the majority of these efforts had been formulated by "outside" policy experts "with parents, teachers, and individual schools participating in the design of a limited number of programs" (2002, p. 563). During the 1980s, partnership programs were planned and managed by professional project directors from outside local school communities (Epstein, 1995, p. 708).

Since the early 1990s, however, this "top-down" approach has been replaced by Action Teams for Partnership (ATPs). These teams are comprised of individuals from the schools and communities that they serve. Teachers, site administrators, parents, and community partners work together to design and implement involvement activities linked to school improvement goals (Sanders & Epstein, 1999, pp. 63-64). The internal structures and the positions of ATPs within each school's organization vary substantially (Epstein et al., 2002, p. 84). Some are organized by involvement type, with one or two ATP members focusing on a single activity cluster; others embrace a more collegial approach, with team members collectively planning for all six types (Epstein, 2001, p. 564). ATPs frequently report to school improvement councils, but they

may operate independently without oversight and may communicate laterally with other internal bodies.

Epstein (2001) recommended that ATPs have between six to twelve members, that they should be initially formed under the school principal's leadership, and that each team should have representatives from all three spheres of her model (p. 564). In addition to the principal, an ATP might have two or three classroom teachers, two or three parents, a community representative, a school guidance counselor or psychologist, and, at the secondary level, a student delegate (Epstein et al., 2002, pp. 92-93). Ideally, the principal would recruit individuals from each sphere, but the literature is silent on how members, including team leaders/chairpersons, should be chosen (pp. 56-57).

In a study of 332 NNPS member schools, Sheldon and Van Voorhis (2004) found that the periodic assessment of program effectiveness by an ATP was a common process feature of successful partnerships. They stated that "when action teams use evaluation tools to reflect on their plans, activities, successes, and failures, they are more likely to improve the design and conduct of partnership activities from one year to the next" (p. 141).

## Parent Involvement Findings

Investigations of parental involvement in schools have resulted in diverse and sometimes contradictory findings. There are two generalizations relevant to these studies that have appeared in the literature. First, there is no doubt that parental involvement in schools tends to diminish over time, and that parents of younger children tend to be significantly more involved than those of older students (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Mattingly et al., 2002).

In a survey conducted in 1986 with parents of first, third, and fifth grade students, Epstein (2001) found that "parents with children in lower elementary grades reported significantly more frequent teacher use of parent involvement, more frequent communications from school to family, and more frequent participation at the school" (p. 168). Even within elementary schools there is a strong inverse correlation between decreased parental involvement and student grade level. In a longitudinal study Izzo et al. (1999), followed students from kindergarten through third grade. Based on teacher reports, the researchers found that the frequency of parent-teacher contacts, the quality of parent-teacher interactions, and the degree of parent participation at school declined over a three-year time span.

The most significant decrease in parental involvement occurs as students make transitions from elementary to middle to secondary schools (Ellis & Hughes, 2002, p. 20). One obvious reason for the decline is due to the fact that in contrast to elementary schools, many middle and high schools use a different structure of curriculum delivery: students rotate from classroom to classroom in the course of the day. A typical elementary school teacher may interact with children from twenty-five to thirty families; at a high school a teacher may interact with students from a hundred or more different families (Schulte, 2004, p. 23). In addition, as children grow and mature, parents may believe that their children do not require as much home support to be successful in school, and, as students become more involved in difficult subject matter, parents may feel that they are less able to furnish assistance.

Partnership program assessments conducted in 1999 and 2002 found that high schools are less likely to implement all six types of involvement activities. In 1999, for example, Sanders and Epstein noted that "although elementary and middle schools were making progress, high schools were less involved and less successful in developing comprehensive, school-wide programs of partnership (Sanders & Epstein, 1999, p. 66, Sanders &

Simon, 2002). Recently, Epstein (2007) noted that middle and high school teachers recall that the only times that they have had direct communication with parents is when a student is in danger of failing or exhibits a behavioral problem (p. 16).

The second generalization that comes from the literature is that the parents of children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less involved in school activities than parents in "mainstream" middle-class families. "Many studies show that although most parents report that they want to be partners with educators, only some parents, particularly those with more formal education, higher incomes, and familiarity with schools remain involved in their children's education across the grades" (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, p. 128). Household income and parental educational level are direct predictors of parental involvement in schools (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Henry 1996). Coleman and Churchill (1997) reported that not only are parents from low SES households less likely to become involved with their children's schools on their own initiative, they are less responsive to school policies encouraging family involvement. Single parents and parents in families in which mothers work full-time also display below-mean levels of school involvement (Sheldon 2003,

p. 150). Traditionally, parental education, race, and household SES are factors that contribute to limited parental involvement in schools. Language barriers impose another set of limits for non-English speaking parents.

According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), although parents from "disadvantaged" households have lower rates of participation in school activities, children whose parents do become involved in schools enjoy gains in learning and academic achievement that are equivalent to those of middle class students with similarly involved parents (p. 203).

While it has not been as widely noted, the association between parental involvement and student achievement appears to be bi-directional. Not only does parental involvement contribute to student academic performance and better school outcomes, parents tend to volunteer more (Type 3) and to participate in school decision-making (Type 5) if their children have high levels of academic achievement and better behavior records (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, p. 127).

Parents of high school students and those from households that have established "risk" factors are less involved in schools than are parents of young students from families with higher SES profiles and greater stores of social capital. These factors also work against the success

of school-family-community partnerships. On the other hand, the positive influence of successful partnerships are as, or even more, likely to promote learning gains among disadvantaged students and to contribute to the improvement of schools serving neighborhoods that contain a high proportion of children who are at risk of school failure.

## Barriers to School Partnerships Findings

Forging school partnerships with parents and the community is a challenging and complex task. Christenson and Sheridan (2001) organized indicators of barriers to parental involvement in schools under three distinct categories: those rooted in teacher attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors; those grounded in parent attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors; and barriers to partnerships. In terms of teacher-centered barriers, Christenson and Sheridan wrote that they "include ambiguous commitment to parent involvement; negative communication about students' school performance and productivity; stereotypes about families, such as dwelling on family problems as an explanation for student performance; doubts about the abilities of families to address schooling concerns; lack of time and funding for family outreach programs; and fear of conflict with families" (p. 75).

There is little doubt that many teachers are convinced that they alone are responsible for student learning and those beliefs constrain efforts to involve parents in school activities (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006, p. 119). In fact, some teachers apparently feel that parental involvement threatens their professional status and authority (Epstein, 2001, p. 155). More commonly, teachers often endorse some types of parental involvement while rejecting other forms.

When Ramirez (2000) surveyed 51 teachers working at a high school in the Midwest, he found that the majority of his study participants believed that parental involvement should be limited to home learning responsibilities. Most of the teachers in the study indicated that annual teacher-parent conferences are useful, but they did not feel that their school should recruit parents as volunteers or those parents should have a role on school decision-making bodies. Of the 51 teachers in the study, only two were willing to participate in an in-service training program that would enable them to increase current levels of parental involvement.

Although teachers are often defensive about their exercise of control over the educational process, many are disposed to blame student academic under-performance to

deficiencies in home environments (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001, p. 53).

Teacher self-efficacy has been identified as a major determinant of teacher parental involvement practices. In a study of 110 teachers working at an urban elementary school that serves a large Hispanic and African American student body, Garcia (2004) found that classroom educators with below mean levels of self-efficacy engaged in fewer parental involvement practices than teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy perceptions. Survey responses indicated that teacher self-efficacy was significantly related to their ratings of all six of the involvement types in Epstein's taxonomy. Garcia concluded that there is a need to "provide opportunities for teachers to enhance their self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to effective practices for involving families" (p. 309). In her estimation, training in techniques for engaging parents would have a positive influence on teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

When Epstein first began her work in the early 1980s, she found that "many teachers do not know how to initiate and accomplish the programs of parent involvement that would help them most" (2001, p. 105). In 2001, Epstein wrote that in most schools, little had changed. The

"picture is still bleak," Epstein asserted, because "most teachers and administrators are not prepared to understand-much less design, implement, and evaluate-productive connections with the families of their students" (2001, p. 6).

Epstein and Sanders (2006) subsequently investigated the extent of partnership-related instruction in programs at 161 schools, colleges, and departments of education. They first noted that most teachers and administrators are educated to think of themselves as individual leaders of classrooms, schools, or districts, with little attention to the importance of teamwork and collaboration with parents, community partners, and others interested in students' success in school (p. 82). Only a handful of the institutions indicated that they offered a single course in school-family-community partnerships or parental involvement. "Despite persistent calls for new directions in teacher and administrator education to include courses on parent education, parent involvement, school and family partnerships, and community relations," Epstein and Sanders wrote, "most colleges and universities need to do more to prepare teachers and administrators to understand and work with students' families and communities" (p. 81).

The characteristics and values of parents are another set of limitations on parents' involvement in school and the opportunities for school-family partnerships. According to Christenson and Sheridan (2001) "feelings of inadequacy; adoption of a passive role by leaving education to the schools; linguistic and cultural differences; lack of role models, information and knowledge of resources; suspicion about treatment from educators; and economic, emotional, and time constraints" deter many parents from pursuing greater involvement in the education of their children (p. 73).

Hoover-Dempsey and her colleagues (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins & Closson, 2005) recently studied the research literature to determine why parents become involved in their children's education. From this review, Hoover-Dempsey et al. cited the following as parental beliefs that contribute to involvement:

> Overall, the literature reviewed suggests that parents' decisions about becoming involved in their children's education are influenced by role construction for involvement, sense of efficacy for helping the child succeed in school, perception of invitations to involvement (from school, teacher, and student), and life-context variables (skills and knowledge, time and energy (p. 123).

The reference to "life-context variables" suggests there are also practical constraints on parental involvement in

schools. The studies that Hoover-Dempsey et al. surveyed found that schools could increase parental involvement by responding to these factors through such activities as training workshops, scheduling of school-based activities, home visits and the like.

Christenson and Sheridan (2001) brought attention to the influence of a third set of barriers that restrict school-family partnerships. These include, "limited time for communication and meaningful interaction; communication primarily during crises; differences in parent-educator perspectives about child performance and behavior; and limited contact for building trust within the family-school relationship" (pp. 75-76). The onus of responsibility for reducing these barriers lies in school policies and practices. But according to Christenson and Sheridan, the primary reason for low levels of parental involvement is "that policies relevant to family involvement are often lacking, and family involvement programs are often viewed as an appendage rather than an integral part of school practice" (p. 58).

At the conclusion of their 2005 study Hoover-Dempsey and her colleagues wrote that parental decisions about school involvement are heavily influenced by perceptions that schools want parents to take part in the education of

their children (p. 123). In a 1992 survey conducted by Epstein with parents and teachers at elementary and middle schools, the strongest predictor of parental involvement was the belief that the school had well-established programs to facilitate their engagement (Epstein, 2001, p. 212). Most of the parents who took part in this investigation stated emphatically that they wanted to become more involved in their children's education and sought guidance from teachers about how to play a more active role. Parental perceptions of school quality were directly linked to their assessments of the strength of partnership programs and to their current level of involvement in program activities.

In a sample of low income, African American parents, Overstreet, Devine, Bevans, and Efreom (2005) found that the strongest determining factor of parental involvement in schools was the perceived receptivity of the school. The degree to which parents believed that school personnel listened to them and sponsored activities for them was more powerfully associated with involvement than demographic variables measured by the researchers, than parental aspirations for their children's educational attainment, or subjects' degree of civic engagement. These findings suggest that partnership program activities can be

effective in eliciting parental support and are essential for parents who would otherwise remain uninvolved.

In the early 1990s, Epstein (2001) summarized the results of partnership program evaluations and stated that "one of the most consistent results is that teachers have very different views of parents than parents have of themselves" (p. 44). She went on to say that teachers are often unaware of the educational and career goals that parents have for their children and that teachers do not understand the information parents would like to have to be more effective at home (p. 44).

Several researchers found significant disparities in parent and teacher ratings of parental involvement, particularly on measures of Type 4 "learning at home" activities. For example, the parents of young elementary school students in Barnard's (2004) study reported that they were more frequently and fully engaged in Type 4 activities than the teachers of these children believed that they were (p. 49). Similarly, Ho and Willms (1996) found little support for the presumption that parents from low SES households are less involved in their children's education than are middle class parents. Although the low income/low educational attainment parents were far less likely to be engaged in Type 3 (volunteering) or Type 5

(decision-making) activities than their middle class counterparts, they were slightly more engaged in Type 4 (learning at home) activities than were parents with higher household incomes and greater educational attainment.

The collective findings of studies reviewed in this section lead to three central conclusions. First, multiple barriers impair the development of high quality school-family relationships. Overall, these barriers stem from stereotypical assumptions, narrow role conceptions, knowledge deficiencies, and mutual misperceptions between parents and school personnel, i.e., classroom teachers. Second, these barriers are especially high for parents of children who are at increased risk of educational failure due to low SES status as well as those with minority group membership and/or low levels of parental English-language fluency. Lastly, many of these barriers can be reduced or eliminated altogether through steps that schools are able to initiate as components of partnership action plans. As partnership action plans are instituted, the level of parental involvement is likely to rise at an increased pace. As stated previously, positive involvement experiences in one involvement type will tend to increase involvement across all five types of school-family activities within Epstein's framework.

## Parent Involvement Effects Findings

Over the past three decades a considerable body of research about the effects of parental/family involvement on a range of student performance outcomes has emerged. Epstein and Sheldon (2006) summarized these studies and observed that, "studies at the elementary, middle and high school levels confirmed that students had higher achievement, better attendance, more course credits earned, better preparation for class, and other indicators of success in school if their families were involved in their education" (p. 125).

When reviewing the research on parent involvement and student success it was apparent that there are some important qualifications that need to be mentioned when discussing the relationship between parent/family school involvement and student success. First, as Epstein (2001) pointed out, "although there are connections between family involvement and student achievement, we still know relatively little about which practices produce positive results for student learning" (p. 100). This speaks to the issue that not all the activities that can be used as elements of a school-family-community partnership will have a direct impact on conventional measures of student

achievement such as improved grades or high scores on standardized tests (Epstein, 2001, p. 51).

It is likely that some parental involvement activities will not result in measurable gains or that the gains will be restricted for some subject areas but not others (Epstein, 1995, pp. 703-704). One significant problem for measuring the effects of parent-family-school involvement in schools is the difficulty entailed in isolating the effects of one program component from the effects of all other school improvement activities that are occurring at the same time (Epstein & Sheldon, p. 2006. p. 127). This is an especially knotty problem because ATP plans are often linked to other broad initiatives, such as efforts to enhance school climate or safety. Most studies of the effects of parental involvement use readily measurable academic achievement scores. But as Epstein and Sheldon (2006) stated, this focus is far too narrow; it neglects the impact of partnership activities on student behavior and health (p. 124). A second aspect of this knotty problem is what Desforges (2003) noted. There are two bodies of studies on the effects of parent involvement within the literature. Some focus on "spontaneously occurring" parental involvement and others focus on

systematic formal partnership activities in schools with partnership programs.

In 1994 Henderson and Berla conducted the first major review of the literature on the effects of parental involvement on student achievement in schools where there was the "spontaneous" type of involvement. From their examination of 64 studies, they concluded that parental involvement is powerfully associated with several measures of student achievement, such as improvements in grades, higher standardized test scores, reduced grade retention, etc.

Eight years later, Henderson and Mapp (2002) surveyed 51 studies published between 1995 and 2002. They compared partnership schools with non partnership schools. Across all the studies, Henderson and Mapp found that regardless of family SES and other background variables, students whose parents were more heavily involved with their children's schools were more likely to:

(1) earn higher grades and enroll in higher-level programs;

(2) be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits;

(3) attend school regularly;

(4) have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school; and,

(5) graduate and go on to post-secondary education (p.7).

Consistent with Epstein's (1995) remarks concerning specific interactions, Henderson and Mapp found that the strongest effects appeared in studies that linked a particular activity or set of activities (interactive homework or shared parent-student reading at home) to gains in specific subject areas, such as language skills or mathematics (p.7). Henderson and Mapp also stated that the quality of the studies contained in this body of research, was noticeably greater than that of the first body of studies surveyed by Henderson and Berla in 1994.

Mattingly, et al (2002) reviewed 41 studies that evaluated parental involvement programs to determine whether they are effective in raising student learning. Initially, Mattingly stated that the findings of these studies appeared to furnish "modest support for the widespread claims that programs promoting parent involvement are useful tools in improving student learning" (p. 567). However, Mattingly et al. went on to critique the 41 studies that lead them to this conclusion and later wrote that, given the methodological defects of 37 of the studies, the literature had "little support for the widespread belief that parent involvement programs are an

effective means of either improving student academic support or changing parent, teacher or student behavior" (p. 571). She also added that his finding did not mean that such programs are ineffective, but merely that the researchers in her group could not determine their efficacy (p. 571).

In addition to these reviews, during the past several years three meta-analytical studies of the effects of parental involvement have appeared in the literature. In these reviews, researchers attempted to synthesize quantitative findings based on several investigations to determine effect sizes. Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 24 studies that studied associations between various measures of parental involvement and student academic achievement. They found "moderate" (but positive) effects across all studies.

Jeynes (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 41 studies that measured the relationship between parental involvement and the academic achievement of urban elementary school students. He found significant correlations between both "spontaneous" and "programmatic" forms of involvement and on all of the student outcome measures used. Two years later, Jeynes (2007) carried out a similar exercise using

52 studies and found moderately significant (and positive) effects for both white and minority group students.

Turning to individual studies, Redding et al. (2004) investigated the effects of family involvement programs undertaken at 129 Illinois elementary schools serving low income families. Although not identical to Epstein's partnership taxonomy, the schools in this project initiated activities that can be classified as activating Type 1 through Type 5 involvement. Two years after these programs began, student improvement on standardized tests in the project schools was significantly greater than the average gain for students attending a matched set of Illinois schools not included in the family involvement project.

Simon (2001) conducted a large-scale mail survey seeking responses from more 1,000 high school principals and 11,000 parents of students attending those schools. Simon found that regardless of student background and prior achievement, NNPS partnership programs had a positive influence upon student grades, course credits, attendance, behavior, and school preparedness. For example, various parenting (Type 1), volunteering (Type 3) and home learning (Type 4) activities were the most commonly reported and had the strongest positive influence on student academic outcome measures. Communications (Type 2) activities had a

powerful effect on student school attendance and behavior while parent participation in school decision making (Type 5) and collaboration with community organizations had some influence on "non academic" variables. Partnership programs did, in fact, raise family and community involvement on all six types of involvement in Epstein's framework. These findings demonstrate that the NNPS approach was highly effective.

Not all studies of parental involvement found statistically significant correlations with measures of student academic performance. Using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study, Catsambis (2001) failed to find any meaningful associations between "indicators" of Epstein's six types of parental-community involvement among eighth-grade students and the twelfth-grade test scores achieved by those students. She did find positive correlations for the parental involvement types in Epstein's taxonomy with both (1) parental expectations of college attendance and (2) course credits accumulated by students during their high school years.

Smaller-scale studies that investigate the influence of specific types of parental involvement activities on students' performance in particular subject areas have generated the most vigorous findings in the literature. In

a 1991 study reproduced by Epstein (2001), 14 elementary school teachers used a variety of techniques to involve parents in reading-related learning activities at home. These efforts were positively associated with student reading achievement as reflected in both grade improvements and scores on standardized reading skill tests.

More recently, Dearing and his colleagues (2006) analyzed longitudinal data covering changing levels of family involvement in school and student literacy performance from kindergarten to 5th grade with a sample of 281 low income, ethnically diverse students. Children of families who increased their involvement in school activities enjoyed improved literacy as compared to those whose family involvement declined.

Balli, Demo and Wedman (1998) measured the influence of teacher requests for parents to help their children with mathematics homework assignments. When teachers either "prompted" parents to engage in this Type 4 activity or directly requested that they do so, parents responded affirmatively. In the absence of prompts or direct requests, however, parents did not take an active part in their children's completion of assignments. Balli et al. observed that parental involvement in mathematics homework

seems to have contributed to an improvement in student grades in math.

Sheldon and Epstein (2005) examined connections between specific family and community involvement activities and student achievement in mathematics by using longitudinal data from ten elementary and eight secondary schools. Sheldon and Epstein's results indicated that effective implementation of practices that encouraged families to support their children's mathematics learning at home were associated with higher percentages of students who scored at or above proficiency on standardized mathematics achievement tests. Sheldon and Epstein found the strongest associations with math achievement and Type 4 ("learning at home") activities that supported mathematics learning. These included homework assignments that required students and parents to interact and talk about mathematics and the schools' provision of mathematics materials and resources for families to use at home. The study indicated to Sheldon and Epstein that subject-specific practices of school-family-community partnerships help educators improve students' mathematics skills and achievement.

While the majority of studies sought links to academic outcomes, some researchers have investigated parent/community involvement's influence upon student

behavior. Sheldon and Epstein (2002) analyzed longitudinal data for 47 NNPS elementary and secondary schools and found that partnership activities are associated with reduced student disciplinary problems. In their study, regardless of a school's prior rates of discipline, the more family and community involvement activities implemented as part of a school-family-community partnership program, the smaller the percentage of students who were sent to the principals' offices, given detention, or suspended from school.

Epstein and Sheldon (2002) found that several family and community involvement practices were associated with increased student attendance at 12 elementary and 6 secondary schools that had adopted partnership programs. School initiation of parent workshops on attendance and home visits by teachers or school officials (Type 1 activities) exhibited particularly strong associations with decline in student absenteeism; the expansion of after-school programs (many involving collaboration with community groups) also raised student attendance rates. While correlations with some activities were relevant, Epstein and Sheldon's central finding was that attendance was most likely to improve in those schools that take a comprehensive approach to family and community involvement

by initiating/expanding activities across all six involvement types.

Two years later, Sheldon and Epstein (2004) examined the impact of school-family-community partnership activities on chronic absenteeism, which was defined as student absences of more than 20 days in the school year. Their analysis of 39 NNPS member schools found that school-family communications (Type 2) and the use of community members as student mentors (Type 6) reduced the percentage of students who were chronically absent from school. Sheldon and Epstein administered surveys to school principals. The principals rated the offering of student attendance workshops for parents as ineffective but an analysis of the statistical results suggested that the workshops contributed to declines in chronic absenteeism rates. As part of this study it was also noted that at most of these NNPS schools, formal evaluations of activities had not yet been conducted.

## School-Parent-Community Partnership Implementation Findings

Despite reservations about the quality of the available research on the effects of parental involvement programs, Mattingly et al. (2002) stated that "parent involvement programs have been modestly successful in changing parent behaviors and student learning" (p. 567).

According to Epstein and Sheldon (2006), longitudinal studies have consistently confirmed that involvement activities undertaken as components of comprehensive partnership programs yield increased parent-family and community participation in activities that support student and school success (p. 122). What is less evident is the extent to which schools, including members of the NNPS and similar associations, have actually implemented the involvement program activities described in the prescriptive literature. Case studies focused on "promising practices" have demonstrated that some schools have adopted comprehensive and exemplary home-school-community partnership programs. Still, very few implementation surveys have been conducted, and fewer have taken into account the perceptions of parents and/or teachers about the extent to which involvement activities are practiced at their respective schools.

Izzo et al. (1999) found that most teachers were satisfied with the frequency of their contact with parents and indicated that they had developed constructive relationships with the vast majority of their students' parents. In this study, responses to a teacher survey indicated that 58 percent of students' parents engaged in some form of learning at home activities with their

children and that 48 percent of students' parents actively participated in school activities. However, on average, teachers acknowledged that they did not know whether approximately one-third of the parents of children in their classrooms engaged in any Type 4 learning at home activities (Izzo, p. 825). While the teachers surveyed by Izzo and his colleagues were satisfied with parental involvement levels, their limited awareness of Type 4 activities was problematic. This suggests that these schools had not undertaken a systematic effort to engage parents in promoting learning and development at home.

Based upon the available evaluation literature and her personal observations, Epstein (2001) stated that even among NNPS member schools, "most schools…still do not conduct well-developed, comprehensive programs with all six types of involvement" (p. 491). Among partnership schools, programmatic efforts to increase bi-directional communication with parents were prevalent, but learning at home activities are much less widely reported and, in Epstein's estimation, "Type 4 activities tend to strongly predict the use of all other types of involvement" (p. 491).

Epstein's somewhat disheartening assessment is consistent with the findings of a large-scale study of NNPS

program implementation conducted by Sheldon and Van Voorhis (2004). After noting that "most schools…still leave it up to individual families to figure out how to be involved in their children's education" (p. 126), the researchers reported findings derived from a survey of ATP chairpersons at 322 partnership schools. Study participants were asked to rate their partnership programs on a six-point development scale to indicate whether their schools had instituted specific exemplary activities under each of Epstein's six involvement types. The vast majority of the subjects reported that their programs had a working ATP, that these teams had formulated a one-year partnership program and that at least some involvement activities had been initiated at their schools. But less than 20 percent of the survey subjects stated that their schools had undertaken a systematic evaluation of how well their programs were working. Furthermore, while certain activities were nearly ubiquitous, others were comparatively rare. Nearly all of the ATP chairpersons reported that their schools had either initiated or expanded newsletters to keep parents apprised on school activities, but very few had instituted measures to encourage Type 4 activities, including, for example, interactive homework. Sheldon and Van Voorhis concluded

that "when action teams use evaluation tools to reflect their plans, activities, successes, and failures, they are more likely to improve the design and conduct of partnership activities from one year to the next" (2004, p. 141). On the whole, programs were dominated by activities that were easier to implement in the sense that they did not require extensive effort by either teachers or parents.

Studies conducted before the establishment of the NNPS indicated that elementary schools develop partnership programs that are "stronger, more positive, and more comprehensive than those in the middle grades" (Epstein, 2001, p. 147). Surveys of NNPS member schools indicate that partnership program development is far less advanced at high schools than at elementary or middle schools (Epstein, 2007; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Sanders & Simon, 2002). The results of Sheldon and Van Voorhis's (2004) survey indicated that elementary schools were more far more frequently engaged in Type 1 through Type 4 activities than secondary schools. However, high schools were much more likely than elementary schools to report both parent participation in decision-making (Type 5) and community collaborations (Type 6). These findings led Sheldon and Van Voorhis to state, "claims that elementary schools have more

parent involvement than secondary schools may over-simplify the reality" (p. 143).

Surveys of the extent to which schools have adopted partnership programs are surprisingly rare when they are considered in relation to "promising practices" reports and in relation to the investigations of partnership program effects upon student academic performance and school experience.

In 2004, Schulte conducted a study entitled *Perceptions of Parents and Teachers in Building School Partnerships*. In contrast to Sheldon and Van Voorhis (2004), Schulte assessed the extent of school-family-community partnership programs through the responses of parents and classroom teachers. Schulte's sample included 63 elementary school and 62 secondary school teachers along with 48 elementary and 42 secondary school parents that were members of the South Dakota Coalition of Schools. In his study Schulte used the survey instrument *Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships* developed by Epstein and her associates at Johns Hopkins University in conjunction Salinas and her colleagues at Northwest Regional Laboratory. Joyce Epstein states that the survey instrument *Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships* "has been used by others in their

dissertations" (personal communication, August 6, 2008). Further Epstein writes, based on our other surveys, "I am sure that the six scales on the *Measure* would have high interreliability. The items are on the *Measure* because of the consistent patterns found in other surveys and in field studies on the six types of involvement" (personal communication, August 6, 2008).

Participants in Schulte's four study groups were asked to indicate the extent to which specific involvement activities in each of Epstein's six types were being used at their schools. They completed a forced-response survey using response categories ranging from "not occurring" to "(used) extensively."

The primary purpose of Schulte's study was to determine the degree of congruence or the degree of divergence in perceptions of the use of various activities among the four groups. He hypothesized that the reported use for each of the activities listed would vary from the reported use in the other three groups. Also, Schulte conducted the study to determine which activities were most often reported as used within the schools that were part of the sample.

There were statistically significant differences in the response patterns of elementary and secondary school

teachers, as well as between elementary teachers and elementary school parents. However, there were no differences between elementary and secondary school parents and no differences in the responses of high school teachers and parents.

The most significant finding in the study concerned the degree of convergence among all four groups on involvement activities reported as least practiced. Study participants in all four groups stated that home visits were among the least practiced activities at their respective schools. This prompted Schulte to write that "efforts by schools and teachers are not being made to create an "extended hand" to families outside the environment of the school where the environment cannot be controlled" (p.94). Indeed, with each of the six involvement types, those activities that involved outreach to parents and attempts to actively engage them in partnerships were perceived to be infrequently used relative to less demanding involvement practices such as encouraging parents to promote reading at home.

## Conclusion

During the past twenty five years, the concept of school-family-community partnerships evolved into a widely used blueprint for enhancing student learning and achieving

school improvement goals. Led by Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, the partnership movement now enjoys substantial policy support and its growth through the NNPS and similar organizations has accelerated. The strong theoretical concepts in Epstein's model are supported by a well-established framework for planning, organizing, and assessing activities that schools can initiate to increase parental/family and community involvement. Despite some methodological shortcomings in some of the studies conducted, overall, the research demonstrates that partnership activities result in higher levels of parental and community involvement. Involvement in partnership activities is associated with important outcomes ranging from enhanced student academic achievement to reduced behavioral problems at school.

There are several sets of barriers that continue to limit the adoption of effective partnerships. They include divergent, and sometimes conflicting, perceptions held respectively by classroom educators and parents. A limited number of implementation studies indicate that schools that are committed to partnership development have not implemented many of the key involvement activities

recommended in the literature. When all of this is taken into consideration there is justification to revisit Schulte's study to extend the existing research base.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

This study assessed the degree of convergence/ divergence in the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the extent to which school-family-community partnerships were being implemented at elementary and secondary public schools within the state of New Hampshire. Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which activities, that exemplify Epstein's six types of school-family-community partnership practices, were utilized at their respective schools to determine whether significant differences exist among teachers' and parents' perceptions of partnership program implementation. It is important to measure teachers' and parents' views regarding partnership activities to identify gaps in knowledge that each has about the other, and to identify common interests. More than ever, it is critical that schools, parents, and community leaders work in concert and establish partnerships to bring about effective learning and developmentally appropriate experiences for all students.

The purpose of this study was to compare teacher and parental perceptions of the extent to which school-family-community partnership activities were being implemented at elementary and secondary public schools within the state of New Hampshire. The study's sample was drawn from parents and teachers organized into four groups: elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, parents of elementary school students, and parents of secondary school students. The participants in all four groups were asked to indicate the frequency with which activities that exemplify the six types of school-family-community partnership practices contained in a model that has been adopted by the New Hampshire Department of Education, are being used at their respective schools.

The study design replicates an investigation conducted by Stephen Schulte (2004) with a sample of South Dakota public schools. This study used the same research design and data-gathering instrument as that employed by Schulte, with a sample drawn from New Hampshire public schools, but utilized a different procedure for statistical analysis. The survey instrument used in both studies was devised by Salinas, et al. from effective partnership practice research findings reported by Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at the National Network of Partnership Schools.

As in Schulte's study, the survey responses of the participants provided subjective indications of the status of partnership program implementation, but the primary purpose of the study was to determine whether there were significant differences (statistically) between the four groups' perceptions of partnership activity levels.

## Design

This study replicated Schulte's (2004) dissertation by following the elements of its study design. It measured whether significant differences were present in the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the extent to which partnership practices, contained in Epstein's model, were implemented in public elementary and secondary schools in New Hampshire. Schulte's investigation is the only study to have compared teachers' and parents' perceptions of the extent to which school-family-community partnership activities have actually occurred. A review of the literature did not reveal any prior studies that compared teacher and parent perceptions of partnership implementation using a sample that included both elementary and secondary level parents and teachers. The replication of Schulte's study will extend the empirical knowledge base in this area and test the reliability of the study.

The findings of Epstein (2001) and many other researchers indicate that "the quality of relations between schools and families plays an integral role in student success" (Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez & Kayar, 2002, p. 349). To obtain information regarding attitudes and participation, self-report survey questionnaires based on Epstein's comprehensive framework for school partnerships, were used to collect data from parents and teachers to answer the same research questions that guided Schulte's study:

1. Do significant differences exist between elementary and secondary school teachers' perceptions in each of the following activities:

    1.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,

    1.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,

    1.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

    1.4 students' learning at home,

    1.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

    1.6 collaborating with the community?

2. Do significant differences exist between elementary and secondary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities:

2.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,

2.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,

2.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

2.4 students' learning at home,

2.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

2.6 collaborating with the community?

3. Do significant differences exist between elementary school teachers' and elementary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities:

3.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,

3.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,

3.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

3.4 students' learning at home,

3.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

3.6 collaborating with the community?

4. Do significant differences exist between secondary school teachers' and secondary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities:

4.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,

4.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,

4.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

4.4 students' learning at home,

4.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

4.6 collaborating with the community?

The data collected from the four study groups were analyzed to describe the perceptions of parents and teachers in regard to the implementation of school partnership activities and the data were used to report the findings sought in each research question.

This is a quantitative, descriptive research study that surveyed parents and teachers. This design was chosen because it was thought to be the most valid design to

accomplish the purpose of the research. The primary purpose of descriptive research is to determine, and provide an accurate description or picture of the status of a situation or phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). This study is designed to gather information relative to the current status of a particular phenomenon and, through the use of different participants, to provide "accumulated understandings" (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p. 10) of the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the building of school partnerships.

> Descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe, "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in the situation. . .The methods involved range from the survey which describes the status quo, the correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, to developmental studies which seek to determine changes over time (Key, 1997).

"Scientists have made many important discoveries through their efforts to describe phenomena. Their research has provided the basis for many other discoveries (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 300)." Descriptive research is equally important in the field of education and is a type of quantitative research that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomena. Researchers are able to explain, change or improve existing conditions in the educational system on the basis of the findings of

descriptive research (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2007, pp. 300-301). The field of interest in this study is well established and investigated in various arenas, but New Hampshire differs from the larger states or cities that have been investigated because it is small, predominately rural and has relatively small percentages of minority groups and households below the federal poverty line. The long-standing New Hampshire tradition of district control over its public schools makes it stand out from many other cities and states that have been studied.

As in the Schulte study, this study employed a survey research design which is used to "generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude or behavior of this population" (Creswell, 2003, p. 154). Since this study used the same instrument as Schulte's study, the data from the survey will accumulate evidence across a sample so that generalizations can be made about the attitudes of a population.

## Population and Sample

The researcher implemented a multi-stage process to select random samples for the four study groups. The sample for the study was derived from a geographically disparate population of elementary and secondary New Hampshire public

schools across New Hampshire and was comprised of districts that span grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12). Each elementary school consisted of a range of grades from kindergarten through grade eight (K-8). Each secondary school contained grades nine through twelve (9-12) and was recognized as a high school by the New Hampshire State Board of Education. The elementary school grade level designations and the secondary school grade level designations are consistent with those specified in sections 189.5 and 194.23 of the New Hampshire Administrative Rules for school administrative units (school districts) in New Hampshire.

First, the broad boundaries of the sampling universe from which all study participants were drawn were determined. Using the New Hampshire Department of Education 2008 alphabetically arranged roster of all New Hampshire public school districts in the State of New Hampshire, the researcher identified those districts that have elementary and high schools in their district. The first fifty school districts that conformed to this pattern were eligible for participation in this study. One elementary school (K-8) and one high school (9-12) from each of the fifty districts were identified to participate in this study. If there were multiple elementary or secondary schools in a district then

a table of random numbers was used to randomly select one elementary and one secondary school for the study.

The researcher sent a letter and an email copy of the letter to each of the superintendents in the fifty districts to explain the study's purpose, to state the researcher's academic affiliation, and to obtain approval for each school identified in the systematic random sampling procedure to participate in the study. Superintendents in forty two K-12 school districts gave permission for their elementary and secondary schools to participate in the study.

Once each superintendent's permission was obtained, the researcher sent a letter to the principal of each of the 42 elementary schools and 42 secondary schools to explain the study's purpose and to seek the principal's assistance in recruiting two parents and two teachers for participation in the study. This letter asked the principals of the elementary (K-8) and secondary schools (9-12) to identify two full-time certified classroom teachers whose last name appeared in the first and second position on the alphabetically arranged list of the school's teaching staff. Each principal was asked to recruit these two full-time teachers into the study sample

and to provide each candidate with a packet from the researcher that included five elements:

(1) a cover letter identifying the researcher and explaining the study's purpose;

(2) a single copy of the teacher version of the survey instrument accompanied by an explanatory cover letter and instructions for the survey's completion;

(3) a single copy of the parent version of the survey instrument accompanied by an explanatory cover letter and instructions for the survey's completion;

(4) a set of instructions within the cover letter for the teacher's nomination of parents as potential study subjects: and,

(5) two stamped return envelopes addressed to the researcher.

The initial sampling universe for the teachers in the study was N = 168; 84 teachers from the elementary schools (K-8) and 84 from the high schools (9-12).

Prospective parent subjects for the study were identified by the teachers through analogous procedures. Each teacher at the elementary school (K-8) and secondary school (9-12) in the forty two participating districts was asked to contact a parent of one of their current students whose last name appeared first in the alphabetically-

ordered roster of all students enrolled in the first class that the teacher taught. The researcher requested that each elementary school teacher and each secondary school teacher recruit one parent and provide the parent with a packet that included: (1) a parent version of the survey instrument; (2) a cover letter that identified the researcher and the study's purpose; and (3) instructions for the completion and return transmission of the survey. Parents were directed to mail the completed survey to the researcher in the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed in the packet. The sampling population for the parents in the study was N= 168; 84 elementary school (K-8) level parents and 84 high school (9-12) level parents.

Consistent with the policies and procedures for the Protection of the Rights of Human Subjects, cover letters to parents, teachers, and principals informed participants of the voluntary nature of their participation and that the completed surveys that were returned to the researcher served as informed consent. The cover letter for each of the study groups explicitly stated that, to maintain confidentiality, identifying information would not be collected and that all individual responses would be grouped with those of other subjects to maintain anonymity.

## Instrumentation

The study's data-gathering instrument is a forced response survey device constructed by Salinas and her associates at NWREL and by Epstein and her colleagues at NNPS, and was used to study teacher and parent perceptions of school partnerships. Two versions of the instrument entitled *Perceptions of Parents and Teachers in Building School Partnerships* were used in this study. One addressed to teachers (see appendix A) and the other to parents (see Appendix B). Other than slight differences in the wording of the directions and demographic information, the content of the two surveys was identical. Permission for the use of the survey was obtained from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon (see Appendix C) and from Stephen Schulte (see Appendix D). The measures are based on the Six Types of Partnership Framework developed by Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University (1995).

Both forms of the survey included seven sections. The first six sections in the instrument titled *Measure of School, Family and Community Partnerships* were dedicated to the six activity types in Epstein's partnership framework - Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making and Collaborating with the Community - and

listed 7 to 14 implementation activities under each activity type. The items on the surveys clarified parent and teacher perceptions about their school's practices regarding the six major types of involvement activities that create a comprehensive program of school-family partnerships (Epstein, 1995). The last section of the teacher survey and the parent survey asked respondents to indicate categorical data to confirm eligibility for participation in the study and to obtain demographic data.

The teacher survey asked for professional judgments about parent involvement practices that teachers use to build school partnerships. The parent survey questionnaire asked for parent attitudes about how parents are involved with the schools. The surveys were analyzed to determine the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding involvement practices in New Hampshire schools and further analyzed to compare the perceptions of the four study groups.

Each part of the measure of parent and teacher perceptions, with the exclusion of the demographic information, was rated using a scoring rubric to determine parents' and teachers' perspectives on how their schools involve parents in partnership practices. The rubric consisted of scores of 1 = not occurring, the activity does

not happen at our school; 2 = rarely, the activity clearly is not emphasized at our school; 3 = occasionally, the activity receives minimal time and emphasis at our school; 4 = frequently, the activity occurs frequently and receives repeated emphasis at our school and 5 = extensively, the activity receives extensive time and emphasis at our school. Analysis of the accounts of parents and teachers, on practices for partnership was employed to create an agenda for action to improve how families and schools throughout New Hampshire can collaborate to guide education efforts.

## Reliability and Validity

In his dissertation Schulte used the survey instrument *Measure of School, Family, Community Partnerships* developed by Salinas, et al. (2000). The criteria of validity and reliability of the survey instrument can be partially addressed through the history of its use. Joyce Epstein states that the survey instrument, *Measure of School, Family and Community Partnerships,* developed by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in conjunction with the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University, "has been used by others in their dissertations" (personal communication, August 6, 2008). The *Measure* was used by Dr. Schulte in his 2004 doctoral

research study. Epstein writes, "Based on our other surveys, I am sure that the six scales on the *Measure* would have high internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha). The items are on the *Measure* because of the consistent patterns found in other surveys and in field studies on the six types of involvement" (personal communication, August 6, 2008). The make-up and use of the survey was judged to be appropriately valid and reliable for the study conducted by Dr. Schulte.

The established survey instrument, based on Epstein's six types of involvement framework, was developed by researchers over ten years ago and has been used by researchers such as Stephen Schulte to assess parents' and teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of partnership participation practices. The content of the measure revealed answers to the research questions asked by Schulte in 2004.

## Data Collection

Prior to data collection, the researcher (1) received permission to conduct research in each school district, (2) obtained permission from NWREL to use the data-gathering survey questionnaire, and (3) contacted Schulte to request and obtain permission to replicate his 2004 dissertation study.

After a systematic procedure was followed to randomly select schools, parent and teacher surveys as well as other informational materials were mailed to the principals of selected schools for distribution to the study sample. In March 2009, each parent and teacher received a packet containing a cover letter with an explanation and directions, a survey, and an envelope addressed to the researcher so that completed surveys could be returned. The researcher ensured anonymity and confidentiality for all individual and district participants.

To identify non-respondents the surveys were coded. Reminder post cards and an email message sent to the principal for distribution to non-respondents were distributed ten days after the return date specified in the initial mailing. After receiving the returned surveys, the researcher sorted and stored them in a locked cabinet and discarded them after the results were tabulated.

## Data Analysis

The researcher examined the survey responses of the teacher and parent participants to address the research questions in this study. These questions sought to compare the perceptions of four groups of respondents (elementary and secondary school teachers; elementary and secondary school parents; elementary school teachers and elementary

school parents; and secondary school parents and secondary school parents) to gain accumulated understandings of the perceptions of parents and teachers about participation practices that build school partnerships.

The returned surveys' demographic responses provided descriptive data regarding teacher and parent participants included in the study. Demographic data from the teacher questionnaire reported the school level of the teacher assignment, the size of the school district, the socioeconomic level of the community, and the regional characteristics of the community where the teacher is employed. The descriptive data obtained from each parent included the size of the school their child attends, the level of the school, the regional characteristic of the community and the socioeconomic level of the parent's community. Demographic data concerning the level of the school (elementary or secondary) was used to make pair-wise comparisons of the perceptions of elementary level parents and teachers as well as secondary level parents and teachers.

Raw numerical survey data for both parent and teacher perceptions were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) for statistical analysis. Based on response rates and distribution patterns, the responses

were collapsed into 3 groups of occurrence frequency: the rarely (2) and occasionally (3) responses were collapsed into a rarely/occasionally category and the frequently (4) and extensively responses (5) were collapsed into a frequently/extensively category, while (1) the not occurring category was maintained.

The survey data were tabulated and analyzed for all respondents; response frequencies and percent of total responses were presented along with pattern declarations across groups for the six activity types in Epstein's partnership framework. The composite analysis for parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community provided data for the total number of responses for each group and is a summation of all responses to the questions for each sub-category of the survey. Statistical differences were calculated by applying a Chi-square test to each set of data obtained through responses to the questionnaires.

Chi square analyses were used to explore overall significant differences between the perceptions of partnership activity usage followed by pair-wise comparisons between the responses of four groups. The alpha for the test of significance was set at the 0.05 level (a

one in 20 chance of occurrence that any differences are due to other factors) for this study. "A probability is a percent stated in decimal form, and refers to the likelihood of an event occurring" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 21). Gay and Airasian state that " the usual pre-selected probability level is either 5 out of 100 or 1 out of 100 chances that the observed differences did not occur by chance" (2003, p. 450). This study of the social sciences uses the "most commonly used probability level (a = .05 level)" (Gay & Airsian, 2003, p. 451) to determine how large the difference must be to be declared statistically significant. In the presentation of results, any value presented that is considered statistically large enough to deem it significant based on the alpha level of 0.05 is indicated by an asterisk in the text and in the tables.

In addition to analysis of teacher, parent, and school level variables, this study explored the influence of three community/school district demographic factors on subjects' perceptions of the frequency of school partnership activities: (1) community socioeconomic groups, (2) school district size and (3) community type. An overall representation of data was reported for each demographic variable and the responses of the entire study sample were

analyzed to determine if demographic characteristics influenced respondents' perceptions of the frequency of school partnership activities in their respective schools. Statistical differences were reported for each demographic variable using chi-square analysis.

The next chapter, Chapter 4 Data Analysis, presents and discusses the findings of the study.

# CHAPTER 4

# ANALYSIS OF DATA

## Introduction

This study measured variation in the perceptions of four groups of public school teachers and parents of public school students about the extent to which partnership practices were being implemented at their respective schools. The subjects, recruited from forty two New Hampshire school districts, completed a forced-response survey instrument that asked participants to indicate the frequency with which specific activities associated with one of the six categories in Epstein's (1995) school partnership model were being conducted at the schools in which they worked or that their children attended. The analysis yielded measures of statistical difference within each pair of groups on the survey instrument's six activity type sub-scales and for all of its 52 partnership activities. Specifically, the study investigated the following four research questions:

1. Do significant differences exist between elementary and secondary school teachers' perceptions in each of the following activities:
    1.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,
    1.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,
    1.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,
    1.4 students' learning at home,
    1.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and
    1.6 collaborating with the community?
2. Do significant differences exist between elementary and secondary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities:
    2.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,
    2.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,
    2.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,
    2.4 students' learning at home,

2.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

2.6 collaborating with the community?

3. Do significant differences exist between elementary school teachers' and elementary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities:

3.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,

3.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,

3.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

3.4 students' learning at home,

3.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

3.6 collaborating with the community?

4. Do significant differences exist between secondary school teachers' and secondary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities:

4.1 helping families establish home environments to support children as learners,

4.2 the use of effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication,

4.3 the recruitment and organization of school volunteer programs,

4.4 students' learning at home,

4.5 parent involvement in school decision making and advocacy, and

4.6 collaborating with the community?

The presentation of data follows and is divided into four sections.

The next chapter section, Section II, provides an analysis of the responses that were used to test the study's four hypotheses. This section presents data representing differences in responses for each of the six partnership model activity types and for the individual partnership activities within four pairs of study groups (1) elementary school teachers and second secondary school teachers, (2) elementary school parents and secondary school parents, (3) elementary school teachers and elementary school parents and (4) secondary school teachers and secondary school parents.

Section III presents the findings for perceived partnership activities between two groups designated by school level. The data results for elementary school teachers and parents of elementary school students as well as secondary school teachers and parents of secondary

school students are explicated in this section of the chapter.

The last section, Section IV, reports the responses that were measured for three community/school district demographic variables for the entire study sample. First, subjects' self reports of household income within their communities were used to discriminate between high, middle, and low income communities. The second demographic variable, designated as "target community type" distinguished among urban, suburban, and rural community types as reported by the study participants. A third variable, school district size, was measured by total school student enrollment as reported by study participants. Data for each variable is presented and analyzed based on survey responses for each of the six partnership activity types and the specific partnership activities in each category. Since the study sample was restricted to New Hampshire public schools the demographic profile of the participants reflected statewide characteristics. However, the school district size variable was heavily affected by the criteria used by the researcher to discriminate small, medium, and large school districts. Accordingly, there were less than 15 responses from districts with an enrollment of less than 250 students (10)

and from districts characterized as urban (7). Therefore, in some cases, at least one of the three response types (frequently/extensively, rarely/occasionally, or not occurring) had fewer than 5 response counts. This possibly affected the chi square values for districts with less than 250 students and for urban districts in this study. The researcher chose not to collapse the demographic categories in order to illustrate the stratification across the originally determined groups. The chi square values are considered to be valid since the majority of the response groups had plenty of response counts.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the data gathered from 155 surveys that included six activity type sub-scales (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community) and included 52 partnership practices activities for the 6 sub-scales on each survey. Each parent or teacher respondent was asked to react to each of the 52 partnership activities using a five point Likert-type scale to indicate his or her current perception regarding the implementation of partnership practices within his or her school. An analysis of the data was accomplished by reviewing the measures of statistical difference within each of the groups on the instrument's six activity sub scales (composites) and for

all the instrument's 52 partnership activity items to determine the extent to which the schools represented within the sample were implementing partnership practices in New Hampshire public schools.

The data analysis focused on the statistically significant variability reported in the frequently/extensively category and rarely/occasionally category for each of the six activity types as well as for the 52 individual activity types. The not occurring response category was analyzed by reporting the item in each partnership activity category that had the highest frequency of not occurring responses since this third response category is significantly reported by participants in this study.

## Response Rate

The responses to teacher and parent survey instruments (See Appendices A and B) were used for the data analysis presented in this chapter. Superintendents representing forty two of the fifty eligible K-12 school districts gave permission for their districts to participate in this study. This represented an 84% response rate for participation.

Each participating school received two teacher surveys and two parent surveys; and of the 336 surveys mailed to

elementary and secondary schools a total of 155 surveys were returned, yielding a 46.1% response rate. Elementary school teachers returned 49 surveys of the 84 requested, a 58.3% response rate. Secondary school teachers returned 36 of the 84 surveys requested, a 42.9% response rate. Elementary school parents responded by returning 43 surveys of the 84 requested, a 51.2% response rate and secondary school parents returned 27 surveys of the 84 requested, a 32.1% response rate. The response rate is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Survey Response Rate

| Group | Surveys Sent | Surveys Received | Response Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary Teachers | 84 | 49 | 58.3% |
| Secondary Teachers | 84 | 36 | 42.9% |
| Elementary Parents | 84 | 43 | 51.2% |
| Secondary Parents | 84 | 27 | 32.1% |
| Totals: | 336 | 155 | 46.1% |

## School Partnership Activities

This study was designed to identify and analyze the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the types of school partnership activities that currently exist within their respective elementary or secondary school. Questions in the teacher and parent surveys contained six categories of partnership activities (parenting, communicating,

volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community) based on Epstein's model of school-family-community partnerships that were derived from a survey developed by Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University in conjunction Salinas and her researchers at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. The teacher and parent surveys contained the same 52 statements (Appendices A and B). Using a five point Likert-type scale, each participant was asked to circle the response that most accurately described his/her perception regarding the partnership practices that exist at his or her school. The data collected were used to answer the four research questions posed for the study.

## Research Findings

The first and second sections of chapter four provide an analysis of data obtained from the responses of four target groups to 52 statements on a survey developed by Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins and Karen Salinas and her associates at Northwest Educational Regional Laboratory. The responses of elementary school teachers, elementary school parents, secondary school teachers and secondary school parents were collapsed into three categories of occurrence frequency (frequently/ extensively, rarely/occasionally and not occurring) for

statistical analysis that would identify the most significant differences. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used for statistical analysis. Response frequencies and percentages of total responses along with pattern declarations were presented for all groups. Chi-square analysis, measuring statistical differences between respondent groups, determined if the response rates within each group were significantly different from the overall response rate.

The composite sub-scale analysis in each category of Epstein's six types of partnership framework (i.e. parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community) provided a summation of all the responses to questions within the category and indicated if there was a significant statistical difference for each activity category.

## Data Analysis for the Four Paired Sets of Parents and Teachers

### Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers

Group responses to research question 1 (Do significant differences exist between elementary and secondary school teachers' perceptions in each of the following activities?) are presented in tables 2-7.

Parenting. The overall parenting composite, represented in Table 2 revealed statistically significant differences in elementary and secondary school teachers' perceptions regarding the frequency of occurrence of parenting activities in their respective schools ($\chi^2$ = 6.47). According to the survey results, 51% of elementary and secondary school teachers held the same pattern of perception that parenting activities occurred on a rare or occasional basis in the schools in which they work. There was agreement across the groups regarding perceptions of the frequency with which six items in the parenting section occurred. Overall, no statistical differences were found for any of the seven individual items within the parenting partnership category.

One parenting item, item 3 (Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school) demonstrated that elementary teachers perceived a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences when it comes to producing information for parents; whereas secondary school teachers perceived a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences for this same parenting activity. Less than 50% of the secondary school teacher group chose the frequently/ extensively category when they responded to item 3. The two

respondent groups had opposite patterns of perceptions for this item.

Parenting item 5 (Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families) possessed the highest not occurring response rate (32.94%); one third of elementary and secondary school teachers perceived item 5 did not occur.

Table 2

Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers

Parenting

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | 85 | 24.71 | (21) | 58.82 | (50) | 16.47 | (14) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | 85 | 29.41 | (25) | 60.00 | (51) | 10.59 | (9) | Same | | |
| 3 | Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | 85 | 56.47 | (48) | 41.18 | (35) | 2.35 | (2) | Opposite | E↑S | |
| 4 | Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | 85 | 37.65 | (32) | 56.47 | (48) | 5.88 | (5) | Same | | |

Table 2 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families | 85 | 8.24 | (7) | 58.82 | (50) | 32.94 | (28) | Same | | |
| 6 | Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 85 | 25.88 | (22) | 54.12 | (46) | 20.00 | (17) | Same | | |
| 7 | Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 85 | 68.24 | (58) | 25.88 | (22) | 5.88 | (5) | Same | | |
| I | Composite 1: Parenting | 595 | 35.80 | (213) | 50.76 | (302) | 13.45 | (80) | Same | | 6.469* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondents had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Communicating. The communicating composite revealed statistically significant differences ($\chi^2$= 49.62) in teacher perceptions regarding the frequency of occurrence of communication activities in the schools. The elementary and secondary teachers perceived activities related to communicating occurred frequently/extensively (62.80%), yet analysis of responses to statements in the survey demonstrate some statistically significant differences.

Of the 14 communication items, six items showed statistical significance in the perceptions of elementary and secondary school teachers regarding the occurrence of these partnership practices in their schools. Item 7 (Sends

home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment) possessed the largest observed difference ($\chi^2 = 32.17$).

Communications item 1 (Reviews the readability, clarity, form and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and non-print communications) and item 7 (Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment) are the only items in the communication category where elementary school teachers and secondary school teachers did not share the same pattern of perception. Less than 50% of the secondary school teacher group chose the frequently/extensively category when they responded to items one and seven.

The highest not occurring response rate (25.88%) occurred in communicating item 2(Develops communication for parents who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type) and was perceived to not occur most by the elementary school and secondary school teacher groups.

| Table 3 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Communicating | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency f all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 85 | 63.53 | (54) | 34.12 | (29) | 2.35 | (2) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 7.28* |
| 2 | Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 85 | 25.88 | (22) | 48.24 | (41) | 25.88 | (22) | Same | | |
| 3 | Establishes clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home. | 85 | 85.88 | (73) | 14.12 | (12) | 0.00 | (0) | Same | | |
| 4 | Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 85 | 68.24 | (58) | 15.29 | (13) | 16.47 | (14) | Same | | 26.35* |
| 5 | Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 85 | 36.47 | (31) | 40.00 | (34) | 23.53 | (20) | Same | | |
| 6 | Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 85 | 69.41 | (59) | 16.47 | (14) | 14.12 | (12) | Same | | |
| 7 | Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 85 | 51.76 | (44) | 27.06 | (23) | 21.18 | (18) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 32.17* |

Table 3 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 85 | 80.00 | (68) | 18.82 | (16) | 1.18 | (1) | Same | | 7.32* |
| 9 | Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 85 | 94.12 | (80) | 5.88 | (5) | 0.00 | (0) | Same | | |
| 9 | Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 85 | 94.12 | (80) | 5.88 | (5) | 0.00 | (0) | Same | | |
| 10 | Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 85 | 55.29 | (47) | 40.00 | (34) | 4.71 | (4) | Same | | |
| 11 | Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 85 | 29.41 | (25) | 58.82 | (50) | 11.76 | (10) | Same | | |
| 12 | Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 85 | 67.06 | (57) | 31.76 | (27) | 1.18 | (1) | Same | | 6.42* |
| 13 | Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 85 | 85.88 | (73) | 10.59 | (9) | 3.53 | (3) | Same | | |
| 14 | Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 85 | 65.88 | (56) | 20.00 | (17) | 14.12 | (12) | Same | | 7.18* |
| II | Composite 2: Communicating | 1190 | 62.80 | (747) | 27.20 | (324) | 10.00 | (119) | Same | | 49.62* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Volunteering. A majority of the eight items related to volunteering revealed significantly different perceptions between elementary school and secondary school teachers in this section of the survey. As shown in the Volunteering Table, the aggregated findings in the volunteering composite illustrated a significant difference in the perceptions of the two teacher groups ($\chi^2$= 60.517) in regard to this activity type. In general, elementary teachers perceived these activities happen frequently/extensively but secondary teachers perceived them as happening rarely/occasionally.

Item 8 (Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways) possessed the greatest statistical difference ($\chi^2$ = 18.41) in the volunteering category. Elementary school teachers tended to perceive a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences when it comes to encouraging families and the community to be involved in schools; whereas secondary school teachers perceived a higher concentration of rarely/ occasionally occurrences for this same volunteering activity. Less than 50% of the secondary school teacher group chose the frequently/extensively category in response to item 8 while elementary teachers perceived this item occurred frequently/extensively.

Volunteering item 2 (Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children) had the highest not occurring response rate (54.12%) as reported by the elementary school teacher and secondary school teacher response group.

Table 4

| Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Volunteering | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school and classroom needs. | 85 | 36.47 | (31) | 41.18 | (35) | 22.35 | (19) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 14.14* |
| 2 | Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children | 85 | 17.65 | (15) | 28.24 | (24) | 54.12 | (46) | Same | | |
| 3 | Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 85 | 43.53 | (37) | 42.35 | (36) | 14.12 | (12) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 11.99* |
| 4 | Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 85 | 29.41 | (25) | 41.18 | (35) | 29.41 | (25) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 7.58* |

Table 4 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 85 | 55.29 | (47) | 30.59 | (26) | 14.12 | (12) | Same | | 8.90* |
| 6 | Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year. | 85 | 51.76 | (44) | 47.06 | (40) | 1.18 | (1) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 9.94* |
| 7 | Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 85 | 23.53 | (20) | 47.06 | (40) | 29.41 | (25) | Same | | |
| 8 | Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.) | 85 | 43.53 | (37) | 45.88 | (39) | 10.59 | (9) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 18.41* |
| III | Composite 3: Volunteering | 680 | 37.60 | (256) | 40.40 | (275) | 21.90 | (149) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 60.517* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Learning at Home. Elementary and secondary school teachers had significantly different perceptions with respect to the frequency of occurrence of the five learning at home items according to the results of the survey. The aggregated responses in the learning at home composite showed a significant difference between the two respondent groups' perceptions of frequency of occurrence ($\chi^2 = 40.67$) regarding learning at home items. Overall elementary school teachers believed these activities occurred

frequently/extensively and secondary school teachers perceived they occurred rarely/occasionally.

Four of the five learning at home activities revealed significantly different perceptions between the two respondent groups and three of the five items had opposite patterns of perceptions between elementary school teachers and secondary school teachers. Elementary teachers perceived a greater frequency of occurrence for ideas to monitor and discuss homework, the importance of reading at home, and the use of interactive homework with a family member.

Item 3 (Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their children) had the most significant difference ($\chi^2 = 37.42$). Elementary school teachers tended to perceive a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences when it comes to communicating about the importance of reading in the home whereas secondary school teachers had an opposite perception and responded with a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences for this same learning at home activity.

Learning at home item 3 (Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen

to their child read or read aloud with their child) had the highest, nonoccurrence response rate in this section of the survey (8.24%) and was perceived not to occur the most by the secondary teacher group.

Table 5

Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers

Learning at Home

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. | 85 | 43.53 | (37) | 51.76 | (44) | 4.71 | (4) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 7.11* |
| 2 | Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 85 | 37.65 | (32) | 58.82 | (50) | 3.53 | (3) | Same | | 9.23* |
| 3 | Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 85 | 57.65 | (49) | 34.12 | (29) | 8.24 | (7) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 37.42* |
| 4 | Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 85 | 51.76 | (44) | 43.53 | (37) | 4.71 | (4) | Same | | |
| 5 | Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 85 | 42.35 | (36) | 54.12 | (46) | 3.53 | (3) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 10.48* |
| IV | Composite 4: Learning at Home | 425 | 46.59 | (198) | 48.47 | (206) | 4.94 | (57) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 40.67* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Decision Making. The decision-making composite showed a small but a significant difference in perceptions ($\chi^2$ = 5.71) between elementary and secondary school teachers according to survey responses. Elementary school teachers, indicated they perceived decision making activities occurred frequently/extensively and the responses of the secondary school teachers indicated they held an opposite perception and perceived they happen rarely/ occasionally.

Of the ten items in the decision making category on the survey, three showed statistically significant different perceptions between the two teacher groups (items 1, 7, and 8). Item 1 (Has an active PTA, PTO or other parental organizations) yielded the most statistical difference ($\chi^2$ = 16.73) between the perceptions of elementary and secondary school teachers. Both elementary school teachers and secondary school teachers perceived a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences when it comes to active parental organizations in their schools and perceived less of a concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences regarding this decision making activity.

Decision making item 10 (Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them) possessed the highest not occurring response rate at 33.00%.

Table 6

Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers

*Decision Making*

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 85 | 78.82 | (67) | 14.12 | (12) | 7.06 | (6) | Same | | 16.73* |
| 2 | Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 85 | 70.59 | (60) | 25.88 | (22) | 3.53 | (3) | Same | | |
| 3 | Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 85 | 58.82 | (50) | 35.29 | (30) | 5.88 | (5) | Same | | |
| 4 | Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 85 | 48.24 | (41) | 45.88 | (39) | 5.88 | (5) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | |
| 5 | Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 85 | 29.41 | (25) | 49.41 | (42) | 21.18 | (18) | Same | | |
| 6 | Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 85 | 41.18 | (35) | 42.35 | (36) | 16.47 | (14) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | |
| 7 | Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 85 | 23.53 | (20) | 44.71 | (38) | 31.76 | (27) | Same | | 6.98* |

Table 6 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 85 | 28.24 | (24) | 60.00 | (51) | 11.76 | (10) | Same | | 6.83* |
| 9 | Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. | 85 | 58.82 | (50) | 38.82 | (33) | 2.35 | (2) | Same | | |
| 10 | Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them, | 85 | 8.20 | (7) | 58.80 | (50) | 33.00 | (28) | Same | | |
| V | Composite 5: Decision making | 850 | 44.59 | (379) | 41.53 | (353) | 13.88 | (118) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 5.71* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= *Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally* group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Collaborating with the Community. The collaborating with community composite showed a significant difference in perceptions ($\chi^2$ = 24.365) between elementary and secondary school teachers. Elementary school teachers indicated they perceived collaboration activities occurred frequently/extensively and secondary school teachers held the opposite perception and indicated they happen rarely/occasionally.

Item 8 of the collaboration section of the survey (Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment) was the only item of the eight that showed a small but a significant difference ($\chi^2$ = 10.78). Elementary school teachers tended to perceive a higher concentration

of frequently/extensively occurrences when it comes to the utilization of community resources to enhance the learning environment whereas secondary school teachers tended to perceive a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences for this same collaborating with the community activity item.

Collaborating with the community item 4 (Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies) had the highest not occurring response rate (28.24%) by both groups of teachers.

Table 7

Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers

Collaborating With Community

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 85 | 31.76 | (27) | 47.06 | (40) | 21.18 | (18) | Same | | |
| 2 | Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 85 | 35.29 | (30) | 58.82 | (50) | 5.88 | (5) | Same | | |
| 3 | Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 85 | 44.71 | (38) | 45.88 | (39) | 9.41 | (8) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | |

Table 7 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 85 | 20.00 | (17) | 51.76 | (44) | 28.24 | (24) | Same | | |
| 5 | Opens its building for use by the community after school hours. | 85 | 78.82 | (67) | 18.82 | (16) | 2.35 | (2) | Same | | |
| 6 | Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 85 | 52.94 | (45) | 37.65 | (32) | 9.41 | (8) | Same | | |
| 7 | Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 85 | 41.18 | (35) | 51.76 | (44) | 7.06 | (6) | Same | | |
| 8 | Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 85 | 58.82 | (50) | 38.82 | (33) | 2.35 | (2) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 10.78* |
| VI | Composite 6: Collaborating With Community | 680 | 45.44 | (309) | 43.82 | (298) | 10.74 | (73) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 24.365* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

## Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Parents

Group responses to research question 2 (Do significant differences exist between elementary and secondary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities?) are *presented in tables 8-13.*

*Parenting*. There was substantial divergence in the perceptions of elementary and high school parents on the parenting sub-scale of the survey as indicated by the composite score which aggregated to a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 36.103$). Cumulatively, a higher concentration of secondary school parents perceived parenting partnership activities occurred rarely/ occasionally in their secondary schools as compared to their elementary counterparts who indicated parenting partnership activities occurred frequently/extensively in their elementary schools.

Four of the seven parenting items on the survey showed significantly different perceptions within the parent group (items 3, 4, 6, and 7) in regard to parenting activities that they perceive occur in their schools. Item 3 (Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school) showed the most statistical difference ($\chi^2 = 14.18$) between the perceptions of elementary school parents and secondary school parents. Elementary school parents tended to perceive a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences when it comes to producing clear information that is linked to children's success in school; whereas secondary school parents tended to perceive a higher concentration of

rarely/occasionally occurrences for this same parenting activity.

The highest not occurring response rate (54.24%) occurred in parenting item 5 (Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families); and there was agreement within the elementary parent and high school parent groups that this activity did not occur the most among the seven parenting items included in the survey.

Table 8

Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Parents

Parenting

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | 70 | 28.57 | (20) | 55.71 | (39) | 15.71 | (11) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | 70 | 28.57 | (20) | 57.14 | (40) | 14.29 | (10) | Same | | |
| 3 | Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | 70 | 60.00 | (42) | 37.14 | (26) | 2.86 | (2) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 14.18* |
| 4 | Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | 70 | 38.57 | (27) | 45.71 | (32) | 15.71 | (11) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 10.36* |

Table 8 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families | 70 | 7.14 | (5) | 38.57 | (27) | 54.29 | (38) | Same | | |
| 6 | Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 70 | 31.43 | (22) | 54.29 | (38) | 14.29 | (10) | Same | | 6.51* |
| 7 | Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 70 | 72.86 | (51) | 20.00 | (14) | 7.14 | (5) | Same | | 10.19* |
| I | Composite 1: Parenting | 490 | 38.16 | (187) | 44.08 | (216) | 17.76 | (87) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 36.103* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Communicating. The communicating composite revealed a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 142.84$) in the perceptions of elementary school parents and secondary school parents as indicated by their responses on the survey. Overall, elementary school parents believed communication items were practiced frequently/extensively; whereas a higher concentration of secondary school parents held the opposite perception and indicated that communication activities occurred rarely/occasionally.

Thirteen of the 14 communication items resulted in significantly different perceptions across the two respondent groups. In seven of the 14 items secondary

school parents responded more frequently that communication activities occurred rarely/occasionally. In comparison, the elementary school parents had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group. Item 7 (Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment) had the largest statistical difference ($\chi^2 = 37.84$) with secondary school parents indicating a higher frequency of occurrences in the rarely/occasionally group and fewer in the frequently/extensively group as compared to elementary parents who held the opposite perception regarding the frequency of occurrence of communication with their schools.

Communicating item 5 (Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school) possessed the highest not occurring response rate (28.75%); nearly one-third of the respondents in the elementary and secondary school parent group perceived item 5 did not occur the most.

| Table 9 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Parents | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Communicating | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 70 | 64.29 | (45) | 32.86 | (23) | 2.86 | (2) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 11.80* |
| 2 | Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 70 | 24.29 | (17) | 48.57 | (34) | 27.14 | (19) | Same | | 6.14* |
| 3 | Establishes clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home. | 70 | 67.14 | (47) | 30.00 | (21) | 2.86 | (2) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 14.74* |
| 4 | Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 70 | 72.86 | (51) | 11.43 | (8) | 15.71 | (11) | Same | | 18.03* |
| 5 | Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 70 | 34.29 | (24) | 37.14 | (26) | 28.57 | (20) | Same | | 8.28* |
| 6 | Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 70 | 65.71 | (46) | 27.14 | (19) | 7.14 | (5) | Same | | |
| 7 | Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 70 | 60.00 | (42) | 17.14 | (12) | 22.86 | (16) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 37.84* |
| 8 | Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 70 | 71.43 | (50) | 25.71 | (18) | 2.86 | (2) | Same | | 12.52* |

Table 9 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 70 | 80.00 | (56) | 17.14 | (12) | 2.86 | (2) | Same | | 16.62* |
| 10 | Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 70 | 51.43 | (36) | 40.00 | (28) | 8.57 | (6) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 11.63* |
| 11 | Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 70 | 41.43 | (29) | 50.00 | (35) | 8.57 | (6) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 7.90* |
| 12 | Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 70 | 51.43 | (36) | 41.43 | (29) | 7.14 | (5) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 9.80* |
| 13 | Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 70 | 75.71 | (53) | 18.57 | (13) | 5.71 | (4) | Same | | 18.85* |
| 14 | Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 70 | 55.71 | (39) | 32.86 | (23) | 11.43 | (8) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 19.13* |
| II | Composite 2: Communicating | 980 | 58.27 | (571) | 30.71 | (301) | 11.02 | (108) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 142.841* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Volunteering. As Table 10 indicates, when the responses of elementary and secondary school parents were aggregated (volunteering composite $\chi^2 = 90.846$) a significant difference in the perceptions of the elementary school parent group and the secondary school parent group existed regarding volunteering activities that take place in their schools. In general, elementary parents perceived volunteering activities occurred frequently/extensively but secondary parents perceived a lower level of occurrence of these activities in their schools.

All but one of the volunteering items revealed significantly different response concentrations between elementary school parents and secondary school parents. For the eight volunteering items, elementary school parents consistently perceived that volunteering activities occurred frequently/extensively as compared to secondary school parents who more often perceived these activities took place rarely/occasionally.

Item 7 (Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules and addresses the needs of English-language learners) had the most statistical difference ($\chi^2 = 21.03$) among the 8 items on the survey. Both elementary school parents and secondary school parents perceived a higher concentration of rarely/

occasionally occurring activities for the reduction of barriers to increase parent participation.

According to the results displayed in the Table, five of the volunteering items (items 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8) showed that the two respondent groups had opposite patterns of perception. In all five instances, elementary parents perceived a higher frequency of occurrence as opposed to secondary school parents who perceived that a lower concentration of volunteering activities took place in their schools.

Forty percent of the elementary and secondary school parents responded that item 2 (Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children) did not occur in their schools and this item was perceived not to occur the most of the eight volunteering items on the survey.

| Table 10 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Parents | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school and classroom needs. | 70 | 40.00 | (28) | 41.43 | (29) | 18.57 | (13) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 6.54* |
| 2 | Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children. | 70 | 21.43 | (15) | 38.57 | (27) | 40.00 | (28) | Same | | |
| 3 | Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 70 | 50.00 | (35) | 35.71 | (25) | 14.29 | (10) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 18.88* |
| 4 | Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 70 | 30.00 | (21) | 48.57 | (34) | 21.43 | (15) | Same | | 14.80* |
| 5 | Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 70 | 62.86 | (44) | 30.00 | (21) | 7.14 | (5) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 20.91* |
| 6 | Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year | 70 | 55.71 | (39) | 37.14 | (26) | 7.14 | (5) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 13.00* |
| 7 | Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 70 | 28.57 | (20) | 47.14 | (33) | 24.29 | (17) | Same | | 21.03* |

Table 10 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.) | 70 | 47.14 | (33) | 41.43 | (29) | 11.43 | (8) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 17.04* |
| III | Composite 3: Volunteering | 560 | 41.96 | (235) | 40.00 | (224) | 18.04 | (101) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 90.846* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Learning at Home. Elementary and secondary school parents had significantly different perceptions with respect to the frequency of learning at home activities taking place in their schools when they responded to this category on the survey. When the findings were aggregated, the learning at home composite ($\chi^2 = 78.435$) showed significant differences between the two respondent groups' perceptions of learning at home activities. The parents of children attending elementary school perceived higher activity levels for this partnership practice than the parents of high school students did. The five learning at home activity items revealed significantly different perceptions between the two respondent groups and all five items had opposite patterns of perceptions between the elementary and secondary school parent groups.

The learning at home activity item with the highest statistical difference ($\chi^2 = 35.12$) was item 3 (Makes

parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their children read or reads aloud to their children). This activity item also had a high rate of nonoccurrence.

Parents of children attending elementary school perceived substantially greater activity levels for learning at home activities.

Table 11

Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Parents

Learning at Home

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. | 70 | 41.43 | (29) | 47.14 | (33) | 11.43 | (8) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 16.97* |
| 2 | Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 70 | 40.00 | (28) | 45.71 | (32) | 14.29 | (10) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 15.15* |
| 3 | Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 70 | 67.14 | (47) | 18.57 | (13) | 14.29 | (10) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 35.12* |
| 4 | Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 70 | 42.86 | (30) | 42.86 | (30) | 14.29 | (10) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | |

Table 11 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 70 | 38.57 | (27) | 47.14 | (33) | 14.29 | (10) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 24.73* |
| IV | Composite 4: Learning at Home | 350 | 46.00 | (161) | 40.29 | (141) | 13.71 | (48) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 78.435* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Decision Making. The decision making composite showed a significant difference in perceptions ($\chi^2$ = 45.601) between elementary school parents and secondary school parents. Elementary school parents indicated that they perceived a higher concentration of decision making activities occurred in their schools as compared with their counterparts who indicated decision making practices had a rare or occasional level of frequency in their schools.

Five of the 10 decision making items showed significantly different perceptions between elementary and secondary school parents. Item 1 (Has an active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations) showed the most statistical difference ($\chi^2$ = 21.82) among these respondents. Elementary school parents and secondary school parents perceived a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences

(80%) in regard to active parental organizations in their schools.

The highest not occurring response rate for the elementary and secondary school parent groups in the decision making category was for item 7 (Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives).

Table 12

Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Parents

Decision Making

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 70 | 80.00 | (56) | 17.14 | (12) | 2.86 | (2) | Same | | 21.82* |
| 2 | Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 70 | 60.00 | (42) | 31.43 | (22) | 8.57 | (6) | Same | | |
| 3 | Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 70 | 47.14 | (33) | 47.14 | (33) | 5.71 | (4) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | |
| 4 | Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 70 | 41.43 | (29) | 42.86 | (30) | 15.71 | (11) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | |
| 5 | Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 70 | 30.00 | (21) | 48.57 | (34) | 21.43 | (15) | Same | | 6.38* |
| 6 | Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 70 | 44.29 | (31) | 38.57 | (27) | 17.14 | (12) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 11.95* |

Table 12 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 70 | 34.29 | (24) | 35.71 | (25) | 30.00 | (21) | Same | | 6.90* |
| 8 | Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 70 | 25.71 | (18) | 48.57 | (34) | 25.71 | (18) | Same | | |
| 9 | Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. | 70 | 60.00 | (42) | 34.29 | (24) | 5.71 | (4) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 13.25* |
| 10 | Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. | 70 | 15.71 | (11) | 58.57 | (41) | 25.71 | (18) | Same | | |
| V | Composite 5: Decision Making | 700 | 43.86 | (307) | 40.29 | (282) | 15.86 | (111) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 45.601* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Collaborating with the Community. The collaborating with community composite showed a significant difference in perceptions ($\chi^2$ = 31.879) between elementary school parents and secondary school parents according to the survey responses of the respondent groups. Elementary school parents perceived collaborating with the community activities occurred frequently/extensively in their schools and secondary school parents perceived these activities occurred rarely/occasionally.

Three of eight collaborating with the community items showed significant differences between the perceptions of elementary school parents and secondary school parents.

Elementary school parents perceived that after school programs were offered for students (item 6), problems were solved for collaborative activities to occur (item 7), and community resources were used to enhance the learning environment (item 8) and that these activities occurred frequently/extensively whereas secondary school parents perceived a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences in these collaborating with the community activities in their schools.

Collaborating with the community item 4 (Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies) had the highest not occurring response rate (28.75%) as well as the highest percent of both parent groups perceiving this activity occurred rarely/ occasionally in their respective schools.

Table 13

Perceptions of Elementary and Secondary School Parents

Collaborating With Community

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 70 | 35.71 | (25) | 40.00 | (28) | 24.29 | (17) | Same | | |

Table 13 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 70 | 34.29 | (24) | 48.57 | (34) | 17.14 | (12) | Same | | |
| 3 | Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 70 | 38.57 | (27) | 51.43 | (36) | 10.0 | (7) | Same | | |
| 4 | Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 70 | 18.57 | (13) | 52.86 | (37) | 28.57 | (20) | Same | | |
| 5 | Opens its building for use by the community after school hours. | 70 | 67.14 | (47) | 28.57 | (20) | 4.29 | (3) | Same | | |
| 6 | Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 70 | 57.14 | (40) | 31.43 | (22) | 11.43 | (8) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 16.28* |
| 7 | Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 70 | 41.43 | (29) | 51.43 | (36) | 7.14 | (5) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 6.87* |
| 8 | Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 70 | 54.29 | (38) | 41.43 | (29) | 4.29 | (3) | E↑S↓ | E↑S↓ | 8.34* |
| VI | Composite 6: Collaborating With Community | 560 | 43.39 | (243) | 43.21 | (242) | 13.39 | (75) | E↑S↓ | E↑S↓ | 31.879* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

## Perceptions of Elementary School Teachers and Elementary School Parents

Group responses to research question 3 (Do significant differences exist between elementary school teachers' and elementary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities?) are presented in tables 14-19.

Parenting. Elementary school teachers and parents had consistent patterns of perceptions regarding the frequency of occurrence of parenting items without significant differences between response rates for the seven parenting questions. As indicated in the composite scores, elementary parents and teachers perceived all parenting activity items occurred rarely/occasionally (45.81%) as compared to frequently/extensively (43.01%). Overall, although the difference was slight, and not statistically significant, elementary school parents tended to perceive a higher concentration of parenting activities occurring frequently/extensively in their schools whereas elementary teachers perceived a higher concentration of rarely/ occasionally occurring parenting activities.

Parenting item 5 (Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families) possessed the highest not occurring response rate; over 30% of the

elementary teachers and elementary parent group perceived item 5 did not occur the most.

Table 14

Perceptions of Elementary School Teachers and Elementary School Parents

Parenting

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | 92 | 30.43 | (28) | 56.52 | (52) | 13.04 | (12) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | 92 | 33.70 | (31) | 58.70 | (54) | 7.61 | (7) | Same | | |
| 3 | Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | 92 | 69.57 | (64) | 29.35 | (27) | 1.09 | (1) | Same | | |
| 4 | Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | 92 | 47.83 | (44) | 47.83 | (44) | 4.35 | (4) | Opposite | P↑T↓ | |
| 5 | Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families | 92 | 8.70 | (8) | 55.43 | (51) | 35.87 | (33) | Same | | |
| 6 | Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 92 | 33.70 | (31) | 54.35 | (50) | 11.96 | (11) | Same | | |

Table 14 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 92 | 77.17 | (71) | 18.48 | (17) | 4.35 | (4) | Same | | |
| I | Composite 1: Parenting | 644 | 43.01 | (277) | 45.81 | (295) | 11.18 | (72) | Opposite | P↑I↓ | |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Communicating. The responses of elementary school teachers and elementary school parents on the communications portion of the survey revealed consistent patterns of perceptions on all 14 communicating items and accordingly there were no significant differences noted in the aggregated communication sub-scale or on any of the 14 individual activity items. The communicating composite showed a much higher response rate of frequently/ extensively occurring responses (71.74%) as opposed to rarely/occasionally occurring (22.44%) responses for items in the communications category.

Communicating item 2 (Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type) possessed the highest not occurring response rate (20.65%); nearly one quarter of the respondents in the elementary school teacher and parent group perceived that this item did not occur the most and

the same group responded that this activity occurred rarely/occasionally 52.17% of the time.

Table 15

Perceptions of Elementary School Teachers and Elementary School Parents

Communicating

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 92 | 77.17 | (71) | 21.74 | (20) | 1.09 | (1) | Same | | |
| 2 | Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 92 | 27.17 | (25) | 52.17 | (48) | 20.65 | (19) | Same | | |
| 3 | Establishes clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home. | 92 | 86.96 | (80) | 13.04 | (12) | 0.00 | () | Same | | |
| 4 | Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 92 | 90.22 | (83) | 6.52 | (6) | 3.26 | (3) | Same | | |
| 5 | Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 92 | 40.22 | (37) | 43.48 | (40) | 16.30 | (15) | Same | | |
| 6 | Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 92 | 71.74 | (66) | 19.57 | (18) | 8.70 | (8) | Same | | |
| 7 | Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 92 | 82.61 | (76) | 11.96 | (11) | 5.43 | (5) | Same | | |
| 8 | Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 92 | 88.04 | (81) | 11.96 | (11) | 0.00 | (0) | Same | | |

Table 15 continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 92 | 96.74 | (89) | 3.26 | (3) | 0.00 | (0) | Same | | |
| 10 | Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 92 | 61.96 | (57) | 32.61 | (30) | 5.43 | (5) | Same | | |
| 11 | Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 92 | 42.39 | (39) | 52.17 | (48) | 5.43 | (5) | Opposite | P↑T↓ | |
| 12 | Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 92 | 71.74 | (66) | 27.17 | (25) | 1.09 | (1) | Same | | |
| 13 | Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 92 | 92.39 | (85) | 6.52 | (6) | 1.09 | (1) | Same | | |
| 14 | Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 92 | 75.00 | (69) | 11.96 | (11) | 13.04 | (12) | Same | | |
| II | Composite 2: Communicating | 1288 | 71.74 | (924) | 22.44 | (289) | 5.82 | (75) | Same | | |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Volunteering. The volunteering composite score showed an overall significant difference($\chi^2$ = 13.410) in perceptions with regard to the frequency of volunteering activities that occur in the schools of elementary school teachers and elementary school parents that were part of

this study. Both groups perceived that all volunteering activities occurred frequently/extensively (52.45%) as compared to rarely/occasionally (22.44%). Of the eight items in the volunteering category of the survey, none of the individual items showed significant differences in perceptions between elementary school teachers and elementary school parents in this category.

One volunteering item, item 4 (Trains volunteers so they use their time productively), indicated that elementary school parents tended to perceive a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences in the training of volunteers to use their time productively whereas elementary teachers perceived a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences in this particular activity.

The highest not occurring response rate (42.39%) was in volunteering item 2 (Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children).

| Table 16 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Elementary School Teachers and Elementary School Parents | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school and classroom needs. | 92 | 50.00 | (46) | 38.04 | (35) | 11.96 | (11) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children. | 92 | 26.09 | (24) | 31.52 | (29) | 42.39 | (39) | Same | | |
| 3 | Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 92 | 63.04 | (58) | 31.52 | (29) | 5.43 | (5) | Same | | |
| 4 | Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 92 | 40.22 | (37) | 44.57 | (41) | 15.22 | (14) | Opposite | P↑I↓ | |
| 5 | Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 92 | 75.00 | (69) | 20.65 | (19) | 4.35 | (4) | Same | | |
| 6 | Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year. | 92 | 68.48 | (63) | 29.35 | (27) | 2.17 | (2) | Same | | |
| 7 | Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 92 | 34.78 | (32) | 48.91 | (45) | 16.30 | (15) | Same | | |

Table 16 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.) | 92 | 61.96 | (57) | 34.78 | (32) | 3.26 | (3) | Same | | |
| III | Composite 3: Volunteering | 736 | 52.45 | (386) | 34.92 | (257) | 12.64 | (93) | Same | | 13.410* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Learning at Home. Elementary school parents and elementary school teachers had consistent perceptions regarding learning at home activities without significant differences in their responses to the five learning at home activity items. The composite sub-scale showed both groups perceived learning at home items occurred on a frequent or extensive basis (60.43%).

While there was a low incidence of "not occurring" responses in the learning at home category of the survey, item 4 (Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs) had a small, but nonetheless the highest not occurring response rate (7.61%) and was perceived not to occur the most by the elementary teacher and parent groups out of the 5 activities listed in this partnership category.

| Table 17 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Elementary School Teachers and Elementary School Parents | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Learning at Home | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. | 92 | 54.35 | (50) | 44.57 | (41) | 1.09 | (1) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 92 | 52.17 | (48) | 45.65 | (42) | 2.17 | (2) | Opposite | P↑T↓ | |
| 3 | Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 92 | 89.13 | (82) | 9.78 | (9) | 1.09 | (1) | Same | | |
| 4 | Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 92 | 50.00 | (46) | 42.39 | (39) | 7.61 | (7) | Same | | |
| 5 | Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 92 | 56.52 | (52) | 42.39 | (39) | 1.09 | (1) | Same | | |
| IV | Composite 4: Learning At Home | 460 | 60.43 | (278) | 36.96 | (170) | 2.61 | (12) | Same | | |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Decision Making. For all items in the decision making category of the survey elementary school parents and elementary school teachers held the same pattern of perceptions and therefore, significant differences were not

reflected in the composite sub-scale or in any of the individual decision making activity items.

Item 1 (Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations) showed elementary school parents and elementary school teachers perceived there was a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences (95.65%) in activities that promote parent organizations in their schools.

The highest not occurring response rate (25.00%) for the decision-making category was item 10 (Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them). The elementary teacher and elementary school parent groups were in agreement about the lack of occurrence for this particular activity.

Table 18

Perceptions of Elementary School Teachers and Elementary School Parents

Decision Making

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 92 | 95.65 | (88) | 4.35 | (4) | 0.00 | (0) | Same | | |

Table 18 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 92 | 70.65 | (65) | 23.91 | (22) | 5.43 | (5) | Same | | |
| 3 | Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 92 | 58.70 | (54) | 36.96 | (34) | 4.35 | (4) | Same | | |
| 4 | Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 92 | 53.26 | (49) | 40.22 | (37) | 6.52 | (6) | Same | | |
| 5 | Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 92 | 34.78 | (32) | 45.65 | (42) | 19.57 | (18) | Same | | |
| 6 | Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 92 | 52.17 | (48) | 35.87 | (33) | 11.96 | (11) | Same | | |
| 7 | Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 92 | 33.70 | (31) | 46.74 | (43) | 19.57 | (18) | Same | | |
| 8 | Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 92 | 21.74 | (20) | 59.78 | (55) | 18.48 | (17) | Same | | |
| 9 | Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. | 92 | 69.57 | (64) | 28.26 | (26) | 2.17 | (2) | Same | | |
| 10 | Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. | 92 | 10.87 | (10) | 64.13 | (59) | 25.00 | (23) | Same | | |
| V | Composite 5: Decision Making | 920 | 50.11 | (461) | 38.59 | (355) | 11.30 | (104) | Same | | |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Collaborating with the Community. For the 8 collaborating with the community survey items, the elementary teacher and elementary parent respondent groups held similar perceptions regarding the implementation of these activities in their schools. Accordingly, significant differences were not reflected in the composite sub-scale score for this activity type or in the 8 individual activity items in this category.

Collaborating with community item 4 (Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies) possessed the highest not occurring response rate(30.43%); slightly more than thirty percent of the responses in the elementary school teacher and elementary school parent groups perceived this item did not occur the most in their schools.

Table 19

Perceptions of Elementary School Teachers and Elementary School Parents

Collaborating With Community

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 92 | 36.96 | (34) | 43.48 | (40) | 19.57 | (18) | Same | | |

Table 19 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 92 | 36.96 | (34) | 53.26 | (49) | 9.78 | (9) | Same | | |
| 3 | Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 92 | 42.39 | (39) | 47.83 | (44) | 9.78 | (9) | Same | | |
| 4 | Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 92 | 20.65 | (19) | 48.91 | (45) | 30.43 | (28) | Same | | |
| 5 | Opens its building for use by the community after school hours. | 92 | 76.09 | (70) | 20.65 | (19) | 3.26 | (3) | Same | | |
| 6 | Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 92 | 64.13 | (59) | 27.17 | (25) | 8.70 | (8) | Same | | |
| 7 | Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 92 | 46.74 | (43) | 45.65 | (42) | 7.61 | (7) | Opposite | P↑T↓ | |
| 8 | Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 92 | 68.48 | (63) | 29.35 | (27) | 2.17 | (2) | Same | | |
| VI | Composite 6: Collaborating With Community | 736 | 49.05 | (361) | 39.54 | (291) | 11.41 | (84) | Same | | |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

## Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers and Secondary School Parents

Group responses to research question 4 (Do significant differences exist between secondary school teachers' and secondary school parents' perceptions in each of the following activities?) are presented in tables 20-25.

Parenting. The parenting composite sub-scale showed statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 8.846$) in perceptions regarding the frequency of occurrence of parenting activities as perceived by the secondary school teacher and parent groups involved in this study. However, 50.57% of this teacher and parent group held the same belief that parenting activities occurred rarely/occasionally.

Of the seven parenting items, secondary school teachers and secondary school parents perceived that 6 parenting items occurred rarely/occasionally (items 1-6). One item (7) that related to respecting different cultures in schools was perceived to occur frequently/extensively (60.32%) by both of the respondent groups.

Only one item of the seven parenting activities showed a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 7.16$). Item 5, (Sponsors home visiting program or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to

understand families) was the parenting item that secondary school teachers and secondary school parents perceived as occurring rarely/occasionally (41.27%).

According to survey results, more than half (52.38%) of the secondary school teacher and secondary school parent group believed parenting item 5 (Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families) did not occur the most in their schools.

Table 20

Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers and Secondary School Parents

Parenting

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | 63 | 20.63 | (13) | 58.73 | (37) | 20.63 | (13) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | 63 | 22.22 | (14) | 58.73 | (37) | 19.05 | (12) | Same | | |
| 3 | Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | 63 | 41.27 | (26) | 53.97 | (34) | 4.76 | (3) | Same | | |
| 4 | Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | 63 | 23.81 | (15) | 57.14 | (36) | 19.05 | (12) | Same | | |

Table 20 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families. | 63 | 6.35 | (4) | 41.27 | (26) | 52.38 | (33) | Same | | 7.16* |
| 6 | Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 63 | 20.63 | (13) | 53.97 | (34) | 25.40 | (16) | Same | | |
| 7 | Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 63 | 60.32 | (38) | 30.16 | (19) | 9.52 | (6) | Same | | |
| I | Composite 1: Parenting | 441 | 27.89 | (123) | 50.57 | (223) | 21.54 | (95) | Same | | 8.846* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Communicating. Survey results indicated secondary school teachers and secondary school parents held different perceptions with respect to the frequency of occurrence of communication activities in their schools, which resulted in a composite score with statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 24.10$). Overall secondary school parents perceived these activities occurred less frequently as compared to secondary teachers who perceived a higher concentration of frequent or extensive occurrences.

The data gathering instrument results for communication item 3 (Establishes clear two-way channels for communication from home to school and from school to home) and communication item 10 (Develops schools' plan and

program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents and others) indicated that parents of high school students perceived these activities occurred less frequently in their schools. Both items (3 and 10) showed statistical differences ($\chi^2$ = 11.38 and $\chi^2$ = 6.18, respectively) for this category of the school partnership practice model.

The highest not occurring response rate (46.03%) occurred in communication item 7 (Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment). Both secondary school teachers and secondary school parents perceived this activity item occurred least of all out of the 14 communication items on the survey.

Table 21

Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers and Secondary School Parents

Communicating

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 63 | 44.44 | (28) | 50.79 | (32) | 4.76 | (3) | Same | | |
| 2 | Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 63 | 22.22 | (14) | 42.86 | (27) | 34.92 | (22) | Same | | |

Table 21 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 63 | 22.22 | (14) | 42.86 | (27) | 34.92 | (22) | Same | | |
| 3 | Establishes clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home | 63 | 63.49 | (40) | 33.33 | (21) | 3.17 | (2) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | 11.38* |
| 4 | Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 63 | 41.27 | (26) | 23.81 | (15) | 34.92 | (22) | Same | | |
| 5 | Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 63 | 28.57 | (18) | 31.75 | (20) | 39.68 | (25) | Same | | |
| 6 | Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 63 | 61.90 | (39) | 23.81 | (15) | 14.29 | (9) | Same | | |
| 7 | Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 63 | 15.87 | (10) | 38.10 | (24) | 46.03 | (29) | Same | | |
| 8 | Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 63 | 58.73 | (37) | 36.51 | (23) | 4.76 | (3) | Same | | |
| 9 | Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 63 | 74.60 | (47) | 22.22 | (14) | 3.17 | (2) | Same | | 9.63* |
| 10 | Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 63 | 41.27 | (26) | 50.79 | (32) | 7.94 | (5) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | 6.18* |
| 11 | Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 63 | 23.81 | (15) | 58.73 | (37) | 17.46 | (11) | Same | | |

Table 21 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 63 | 42.86 | (27) | 49.21 | (31) | 7.94 | (5) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | |
| 13 | Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 63 | 65.08 | (41) | 25.40 | (16) | 9.52 | (6) | Same | | |
| 14 | Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 63 | 41.27 | (26) | 46.03 | (29) | 12.70 | (8) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | |
| II | Composite 2: Communicating | 882 | 44.67 | (394) | 38.10 | (336) | 17.23 | (152) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | 24.10* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Volunteering. The responses of secondary school teachers and secondary school parents on the volunteering portion of the survey revealed a consistent pattern of perceptions on the eight volunteering items and accordingly the volunteering sub-scale composite and the individual items within this category did not reflect a statistical significance. Additionally, the secondary level teachers and parents who participated in this study indicated they perceived that volunteering activities were a rare or occasional occurrence in their schools (48.02%).

Item 5 (Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts) showed secondary school teachers perceived a

higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences when it came to recognizing volunteers, whereas secondary school parents tended to perceive a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences for this same activity.

Volunteering item 2 (Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children) had the highest not occurring response rate (55.56%). The secondary school teacher and parent groups were in agreement about the lack of occurrence for this particular activity.

**Table 22**

Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers and Secondary School Parents

Volunteering

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school and classroom needs. | 63 | 20.63 | (13) | 46.03 | (29) | 33.33 | (21) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children. | 63 | 9.52 | (6) | 34.92 | (22) | 55.56 | (35) | Same | | |

Table 22 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 63 | 22.22 | (14) | 50.79 | (32) | 26.98 | (17) | Same | | |
| 4 | Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 63 | 14.29 | (9) | 44.44 | (28) | 41.27 | (26) | Same | | |
| 5 | Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 63 | 34.92 | (22) | 44.44 | (28) | 20.63 | (13) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | |
| 6 | Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year. | 63 | 31.75 | (20) | 61.90 | (39) | 6.35 | (4) | Same | | |
| 7 | Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 63 | 12.70 | (8) | 44.44 | (28) | 42.86 | (27) | Same | | |
| 8 | Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.) | 63 | 20.63 | (13) | 57.14 | (36) | 22.22 | (14) | Same | | |
| III | Composite 3: Volunteering | 504 | 20.83 | (105) | 48.02 | (242) | 31.15 | (157) | Same | | |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Learning at Home. The learning at home composite score for this partnership activity aggregated to a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 21.79$) as a result of the perceptions of secondary school teachers and secondary school parents regarding the frequency of occurrence of learning at home activities. The majority of high school

teacher and parent respondents indicated learning at home activities were a rare or occasional occurrence (56.19%).

Of the five learning at home items, item 5, (Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member) showed the only statistical difference ($\chi^2$ = 10.13). Both secondary school teachers and secondary school parents perceived a higher concentration of rarely/ occasionally occurrences (63.49%) with regard to interactive homework as a learning at home activity in their schools.

Learning at home item 3 (Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child) possessed the highest not occurring response rate (25.40%); according to the responses in this section of the survey, one fourth of the secondary school teacher and parent participants perceived this activity item was the most likely not to occur.

| Table 23 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers and Secondary School Parents | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Learning at Home | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. | 63 | 25.40 | (16) | 57.14 | (36) | 17.46 | (11) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 63 | 19.05 | (12) | 63.49 | (40) | 17.46 | (11) | Same | | |
| 3 | Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 63 | 22.22 | (14) | 52.38 | (33) | 25.40 | (16) | Same | | |
| 4 | Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 63 | 44.44 | (28) | 44.44 | (28) | 11.11 | (7) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | |
| 5 | Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 63 | 17.46 | (11) | 63.49 | (40) | 19.05 | (12) | Same | | 10.13* |
| IV | Composite 4: Learning At Home | 315 | 25.71 | (81) | 56.19 | (177) | 18.10 | (57) | Same | | 21.79* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Decision Making. The decision making composite showed a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 11.14$) in the perceptions of secondary school teachers and secondary school parents with respect to the frequency of occurrence of decision making activities that occur in their schools.

Both perceived that activities related to decision making occurred rarely/occasionally (44.44%).

Of the ten items in the decision making category, only item 8 (Includes students along with parents in decision making groups) showed a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 12.78$). Secondary school teachers and secondary school parents perceived a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences regarding the inclusion of students and parents in decision making groups than high school teachers reported.

The secondary school teachers group perceived a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences in their perceptions regarding parent representation on district advisory councils (item 3) and dealing with conflict openly and respectfully (item 9) as compared to parents. Parents tended to perceive that these decision making activities occurred rarely/occasionally.

Decision making item 7 had a not occurring response rate of 47.62% which indicated that almost half of the secondary school parent and teacher groups perceived activities that develop formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives were the most likely not to occur in the decision making partnership practices taking place in their schools.

| Table 24 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers and Secondary School Parents | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Decision Making | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 63 | 55.56 | (35) | 31.75 | (20) | 12.70 | (8) | Same | | |
| 2 | Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 63 | 58.73 | (37) | 34.92 | (22) | 6.35 | (4) | Same | | |
| 3 | Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 63 | 46.03 | (29) | 46.03 | (29) | 7.94 | (5) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | |
| 4 | Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 63 | 33.33 | (21) | 50.79 | (32) | 15.87 | (10) | Same | | |
| 5 | Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 63 | 22.22 | (14) | 53.97 | (34) | 23.81 | (15) | Same | | |
| 6 | Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 63 | 28.57 | (18) | 47.62 | (30) | 23.81 | (15) | Same | | |
| 7 | Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 63 | 20.63 | (13) | 31.75 | (20) | 47.62 | (30) | Same | | |
| 8 | Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 63 | 34.92 | (22) | 47.62 | (30) | 17.46 | (11) | Same | | 12.78* |
| 9 | Deals with conflict openly and respectfully | 63 | 44.44 | (28) | 49.21 | (31) | 6.35 | (4) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | |
| 10 | Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. | 63 | 12.70 | (8) | 50.79 | (32) | 36.51 | (23) | Same | | |
| V | Composite 5: Decision Making | 630 | 35.71 | (225) | 44.44 | (280) | 19.84 | (125) | Same | | 11.14* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Collaborating with the Community. Overall, the responses of the secondary school teacher and secondary school parent groups aggregated to a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 24.37$) due to their perceptions regarding the frequency of occurrence of collaborating with the community activities that occur in their schools. The groups held the same perception that items related to collaboration occurred rarely/occasionally (49.40%) as compared to the frequently/extensively.

Only one of the eight collaborating with community items (item 6) showed significantly different perceptions ($\chi^2 = 8.09$) between the secondary school teacher and parent groups. Secondary school teachers perceived a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurrences for the offering of after school programs in their schools; whereas secondary school parents tended to perceive a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences for the same collaborating with the community activity. Less than 50% of the secondary school parent group chose frequently/extensively when they responded to item 6.

The highest not occurring response rate (26.98%) occurred in collaborating with the community item 1 ("Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs,

and agencies."). The secondary school teachers and secondary school parents rated this as an item that occurs the least of all.

Table 25

Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers and Secondary School Parents

Collaborating With Community

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df = 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 63 | 28.57 | (18) | 44.44 | (28) | 26.98 | (17) | Same | | |
| 2 | Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 63 | 31.75 | (20) | 55.56 | (35) | 12.70 | (8) | Same | | |
| 3 | Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 63 | 41.27 | (26) | 49.21 | (31) | 9.52 | (6) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | |
| 4 | Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 63 | 17.46 | (11) | 57.14 | (36) | 25.40 | (16) | Same | | |
| 5 | Opens its building for use by the community after school hours | 63 | 69.84 | (44) | 26.98 | (17) | 3.17 | (2) | Same | | |
| 6 | Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 63 | 41.27 | (26) | 46.03 | (29) | 12.70 | (8) | Opposite | P↓T↑ | 8.09* |
| 7 | Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 63 | 33.33 | (21) | 60.32 | (38) | 6.35 | (4) | Same | | |

Table 25 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 63 | 39.68 | (25) | 55.56 | (35) | 4.76 | (3) | Same | | |
| VI | Composite 6: Collaborating With Community | 504 | 37.90 | (191) | 49.40 | (249) | 12.70 | (64) | Same | | 24.37* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

## Data Analysis Aggregated by School Level

## Perceptions of Participants Based on Elementary and Secondary School Levels

*Results are presented in Tables 26-31*

Parenting. The composite sub-scale for the parenting section of the survey showed an overall statistically significant difference ($X^2$ = 35.736) in the perceptions of respondents based on their primary grade assignment of elementary level (K-8) or secondary level (9-12). Participants at both levels perceived parenting partnership activities occurred rarely/occasionally (47.74%). Of the seven parenting items in this section of the survey, three activity items showed significant statistical differences. The strongest differences were found in responses related to producing information that is clear, usable and linked to academic success and in asking family members about

their children's goals, strengths, and talents ($\chi^2$ = 12.87 and $\chi^2$ = 14.12).

Parenting item 5 (Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families) had the highest not occurring response rate (42.58%) and this partnership activity was perceived not to occur the most by the elementary and secondary groups.

Table 26

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School Grade Assignment

Parenting

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | 155 | 26.45 | (41) | 57.42 | (89) | 16.13 | (25) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | 155 | 29.03 | (45) | 58.71 | (91) | 12.26 | (19) | Same | | |
| 3 | Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | 155 | 58.06 | (90) | 39.35 | (61) | 2.58 | (4) | Opposite | E↓S↑ | 12.87* |
| 4 | Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | 155 | 38.06 | (59) | 51.61 | (80) | 10.32 | (16) | Same | | 14.12* |

Table 26 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families | 155 | 7.74 | (12) | 49.68 | (77) | 42.58 | (66) | Same | | |
| 6 | Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 155 | 28.39 | (44) | 54.19 | (84) | 17.42 | (27) | Same | | 6.12* |
| 7 | Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 155 | 70.32 | (109) | 23.23 | (36) | 6.45 | (10) | Same | | |
| I | Composite 1: Parenting | 1085 | 36.87 | (400) | 47.74 | (518) | 15.39 | (167) | Same | | 35.736* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Communicating. The aggregated findings of the communication section of the survey showed a significant statistical difference ($X^2$ = 172.869) within the elementary and secondary groups for the frequency of occurrence for communicating activities occurring in their schools. Elementary and secondary level subjects concurred that communicating activities occurred frequently/extensively (60.74%). Twelve of the fourteen items generated statistical differences and the results were mixed. When opposite perceptions existed, elementary school subjects indicated a higher frequency of occurrence for this

partnership activity than their secondary level counterparts.

Communicating item 2, (Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type) possessed the highest not occurring response rate (26.45%); over one quarter of the respondents in the elementary and secondary level primary grade assignment groups perceived this activity item occurs least of all in their schools.

Table 27

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School Grade Assignment

Communicating

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df= 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 155 | 63.87 | (99) | 33.55 | (52) | 2.58 | (4) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 17.63* |
| 2 | Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 155 | 25.16 | (39) | 48.39 | (75) | 26.45 | (41) | Same | | |
| 3 | Establishes clear two-way channels for communi-cations from home to school and from school to home. | 155 | 77.42 | (120) | 21.29 | (33) | 1.29 | (2) | Same | | 12.81* |
| 4 | Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 155 | 70.32 | (109) | 13.55 | (21) | 16.13 | (25) | Same | | 44.22* |

Table 27 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 155 | 35.48 | (55) | 38.71 | (60) | 25.81 | (40) | Same | | 10.67* |
| 6 | Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 155 | 67.74 | (105) | 21.29 | (33) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |
| 7 | Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 155 | 55.48 | (86) | 22.58 | (35) | 21.94 | (34) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 69.42* |
| 8 | Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 155 | 76.13 | (118) | 21.94 | (34) | 1.94 | (3) | Same | | 18.87* |
| 9 | Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 155 | 87.74 | (136) | 10.97 | (17) | 1.29 | (2) | Same | | 17.26* |
| 10 | Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 40.00 | (62) | 6.45 | (10) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 6.44* |
| 11 | Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 155 | 34.84 | (54) | 54.84 | (85) | 10.32 | (16) | Same | | 9.23* |
| 12 | Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 155 | 60.00 | (93) | 36.13 | (56) | 3.87 | (6) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 14.75* |
| 13 | Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 155 | 81.29 | (126) | 14.19 | (22) | 4.52 | (7) | Same | | 18.71* |

Table 27 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 155 | 61.29 | (95) | 25.81 | (40) | 12.90 | (20) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 23.76* |
| II | Composite 2: Communicating | 2170 | 60.74 | (1318) | 28.80 | (625) | 10.46 | (227) | Same | | 172.869* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Volunteering. The aggregated findings for the volunteering composite showed strong, significantly different perceptions between respondents whose primary grade assignment was the elementary level(K-8) and those whose primary grade assignment was the secondary level ($\chi^2$ = 139.115). Overall, the elementary level respondents perceived volunteering activities occurred frequently/ extensively in their K-8 schools and secondary level respondents perceived volunteering activities occurred rarely/occasionally in their grade 9-12 schools.

All of the volunteering items revealed a significant difference in the perceptions of the elementary (K-8) and secondary level (9-12) respondents. For each of the five volunteering items that showed opposite patterns of perceptions, elementary respondents perceived these activities occurred frequently/extensively whereas secondary level respondents perceived they occurred rarely/occasionally.

The highest not occurring response rate (47.74%) occurred in volunteering item 2 (Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children).

Table 28

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School Grade Assignment

Volunteering

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school and classroom needs. | 155 | 38.06 | (59) | 41.29 | (64) | 20.65 | (32) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 17.32* |
| 2 | Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children | 155 | 19.35 | (30) | 32.90 | (51) | 47.74 | (74) | Same | | 6.78* |
| 3 | Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 155 | 46.45 | (72) | 39.35 | (61) | 14.19 | (22) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 29.17* |
| 4 | Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 155 | 29.68 | (46) | 44.52 | (69) | 25.81 | (40) | Same | | 18.30* |
| 5 | Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 155 | 58.71 | (91) | 30.32 | (47) | 10.97 | (17) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 26.25* |
| 6 | Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 42.58 | (66) | 3.87 | (6) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 20.41* |

Table 28 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 155 | 25.81 | (40) | 47.10 | (73) | 27.10 | (42) | Same | | 16.95* |
| 8 | Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.) | 155 | 45.16 | (70) | 43.87 | (68) | 10.97 | (17) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 30.65* |
| III | Composite 3: Volunteering | 1240 | 39.60 | (491) | 40.24 | (499) | 20.16 | (250) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 139.115* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Learning at Home. The learning at home composite findings aggregated to a strong statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 114.470$) in perceptions across elementary (K-8) and secondary level (9-12) respondent groups. Cumulatively, a higher concentration of respondents at the K-8 level perceived learning at home activities occurred frequently/extensively as compared with the 9-12 respondents who perceived these activities occurred rarely/occasionally at their schools.

Four of the five learning at home items that showed significantly different perceptions existed across the two groups. Four items (items 1,2,3, and 5) indicated elementary level respondents consistently perceived these learning at

home activities occurred frequently/extensively as opposed to secondary level respondents who perceived they occurred rarely/occasionally. Item 3, (Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their children read or read aloud with their child) in the learning at home category showed a statistical difference ($\chi^2 = 72.21$); participants at the elementary level tended to perceive a higher concentration of frequently/extensively learning at home activities whereas secondary level participants perceived a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally learning at home activities for their grade level assignment.

A small percent (10.97%) of respondents from the elementary and secondary school grade level groups perceived learning at home item 3 (Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child) as the activity that did not occur the most at their schools.

| Table 29 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Participants Relative to School Grade Assignment | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Learning at Home | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=2) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. | 155 | 42.58 | (66) | 49.68 | (77) | 7.74 | (12) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 21.50* |
| 2 | Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 155 | 38.71 | (60) | 52.90 | (82) | 8.39 | (13) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 23.26* |
| 3 | Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 155 | 61.94 | (96) | 27.10 | (42) | 10.97 | (17) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 72.21* |
| 4 | Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 155 | 47.74 | (74) | 43.23 | (67) | 9.03 | (14) | Same | | |
| 5 | Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 155 | 40.65 | (63) | 50.97 | (79) | 8.39 | (13) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 31.68* |
| IV | Composite 4: Learning At Home | 775 | 46.32 | (359) | 44.77 | (347) | 8.90 | (69) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 114.470* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Decision Making. The survey findings for the decision making composite sub-scale aggregated to a statistically significant difference in perceptions ($\chi^2$ = 39.084) with

elementary level participants indicating a higher frequency of occurrence. Significant differences were also observed for five of the decision making activity types and most often elementary subjects perceived the decision making partnership activities occurred frequently/extensively.

For each of the three decision making items that showed opposite patterns of perception, elementary respondents perceived these items occurred frequently/extensively as compared to their secondary level counterparts, who perceived a rare or occasional occurrence for these partnership practices.

Decision making item 7 (Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives) possessed the highest not occurring response rate (30.97%).

Table 30

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School Grade Assignment

Decision Making

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 155 | 79.35 | (123) | 15.48 | (24) | 5.16 | (8) | Same | | 37.38* |
| 2 | Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 155 | 65.81 | (102) | 28.39 | (44) | 5.81 | (9) | Same | | |

Table 30 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 40.65 | (63) | 5.81 | (9) | Same | | |
| 4 | Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 155 | 45.16 | (70) | 44.52 | (69) | 10.32 | (16) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 7.39* |
| 5 | Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 155 | 29.68 | (46) | 49.03 | (76) | 21.29 | (33) | Same | | |
| 6 | Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 155 | 42.58 | (66) | 40.65 | (63) | 16.77 | (26) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 9.29* |
| 7 | Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 155 | 28.39 | (44) | 40.65 | (63) | 30.97 | (48) | Same | | 13.81* |
| 8 | Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 155 | 27.10 | (42) | 54.84 | (85) | 18.06 | (28) | Same | | |
| 9 | Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. | 155 | 59.35 | (92) | 36.77 | (57) | 3.87 | (6) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 10.12* |
| 10 | Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. | 155 | 11.61 | (18) | 58.71 | (91) | 29.68 | (46) | Same | | |
| V | Composite 5: Decision making | 1550 | 44.26 | (686) | 40.97 | (635) | 14.77 | (229) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 39.084* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Collaborating with the Community. The survey findings for the collaborating with the community composite aggregated to a moderate statistically significant difference in perceptions ($\chi^2$ = 15.459) with elementary level participants perceiving a higher frequency of

occurrence for this activity type. Of the eight collaboration activity types only two displayed small statistical differences (items 6, 8) and in both instances elementary level participants perceived a greater frequency of occurrence than secondary level participants.

The highest not occurring response rate occurred in collaborating with community item 4 (Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies) by the respondents in the elementary and secondary level paired groups.

Table 31

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School Grade Assignment

Collaborating With Community

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 155 | 33.55 | (52) | 43.87 | (68) | 22.58 | (35) | Same | | |
| 2 | Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 155 | 34.84 | (54) | 54.19 | (84) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |
| 3 | Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 155 | 41.94 | (65) | 48.39 | (75) | 9.68 | (15) | Same | | |

Table 31 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 155 | 19.35 | (30) | 52.26 | (81) | 28.39 | (44) | Same | | |
| 5 | Opens its building for use by the community after school hours. | 155 | 73.55 | (114) | 23.23 | (36) | 3.23 | (5) | Same | | |
| 6 | Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 155 | 54.84 | (85) | 34.84 | (54) | 10.32 | (16) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 7.96* |
| 7 | Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 155 | 41.29 | (64) | 51.61 | (80) | 7.10 | (11) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | |
| 8 | Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 155 | 56.77 | (88) | 40.00 | (62) | 3.23 | (5) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 12.65* |
| VI | Composite 6: Collaborating With Community | 1240 | 44.52 | (552) | 43.55 | (540) | 11.94 | (148) | Opposite | E↑S↓ | 15.459* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; E= elementary; S = Secondary; T= Teacher; P = Parent; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

## Data Analysis for Community District Factors

As stated previously, Section IV in this chapter reports the responses that were measured for three community/school district demographic variables and the responses of the entire study sample. Subjects' self reports of household income within their communities were used to discriminate between high, middle, and low income

communities. The second demographic variable, which was designated as "target community type" distinguished among urban, suburban and rural community types as reported by the study participants. A third variable, school district size, was measured by total district student enrollment as reported by study participants. Data for each variable is presented and analyzed based on survey responses for each of the six partnership activity types and the individual partnership activities in each category. Since the study sample was restricted to New Hampshire public schools, the demographic profile of the participants reflected statewide characteristics. However, the school district size variable was heavily affected by the criteria used by the researcher to discriminate among small, medium, and large school districts. As indicated in Table 50, there were less than 15 responses from schools with district enrollment size of less than 250 students (10) and from the target community of urban (7). This means that regardless of the responses there were at least one of three response types (frequently/extensively, rarely/occasionally, or not occurring) that had less than five response counts. This possibly affected the chi square value for these two variables. The researcher chose not to collapse the demographic categories in order to illustrate the

stratification across the originally determined groups. The chi square values are considered to be valid since the majority of the response groups had plenty of response counts.

## Perceptions of Participants Relative to School District Enrollment Size

*Results are presented in Tables 32-37*

Parenting. The survey findings for the parenting composite showed a small statistically significant difference in perceptions ($\chi^2$ = 14.475) between school districts with small, medium and large enrollment sizes. Cumulatively, small (less than 250 students), medium (250-750 students), and large (over 750 students) school districts showed the same general perceptions of parenting activities; 47.74% perceived parenting activities occurred rarely/ occasionally.

Of the seven parenting items, item 2 showed a statistical difference ($\chi^2$ = 15.79) across districts according to their enrollment size. Participants across small, medium, and large school districts perceived that the frequency of occurrence for activities that provide information and assistance to all families occurred rarely/occasionally.

Parenting item 5 (Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families) had the highest not occurring response rate (42.58%) and was perceived not to occur most as indicated by respondents across the school district size groups.

Table 32

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School District Enrollment Size

Parenting

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | 155 | 26.45 | (41) | 57.42 | (89) | 16.13 | (25) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | 155 | 29.03 | (45) | 58.71 | (91) | 12.26 | (19) | Same | | 15.79* |
| 3 | Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | 155 | 58.06 | (90) | 39.35 | (61) | 2.58 | (4) | Same | | |
| 4 | Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | 155 | 38.06 | (59) | 51.61 | (80) | 10.32 | (16) | Same | | |
| 5 | Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families. | 155 | 7.74 | (12) | 49.68 | (77) | 42.58 | (66) | Same | | |
| 6 | Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 155 | 28.39 | (44) | 54.19 | (84) | 17.42 | (27) | Same | | |

Table 32 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 155 | 70.32 | (109) | 23.23 | (36) | 6.45 | (10) | Same | | |
| I | Composite 1: Parenting | 1085 | 36.87 | (400) | 47.74 | (518) | 15.39 | (167) | Same | | 14.745* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Communicating. The survey findings for the communicating composite showed statistically significant differences in perceptions regarding the frequency of occurrence of communication items ($\chi^2 = 20.808$) across districts based on their enrollment size. However, the pattern of responses was the same between small (less than 250 students), medium (250-750 students), and large (over 750 students) districts. Overall, participants across districts with different enrollment sizes perceived a higher concentration of communicating activities occurring frequently/extensively (60.74%) as compared to rarely/occasionally responses.

Item 7 was the only item that showed a small but statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 9.95$) across all size districts. Participants in small, medium and large

size school districts tended to perceive a higher concentration of frequently/extensively occurring activities for this communication item in their districts.

Communicating item 2 (Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type) possessed the highest not occurring response rate; over 25% of the respondents in the small, medium, and large size school districts perceived activity item two did not occur the most in their schools.

Table 33

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School District Enrollment Size

Communicating

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 155 | 63.87 | (99) | 33.55 | (52) | 2.58 | (4) | Same | | |
| 2 | Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 155 | 25.16 | (39) | 48.39 | (75) | 26.45 | (41) | Same | | |
| 3 | Establishes clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home. | 155 | 77.42 | (120) | 21.29 | (33) | 1.29 | (2) | Same | | |
| 4 | Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 155 | 70.32 | (109) | 13.55 | (21) | 16.13 | (25) | Same | | |

Table 33 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 155 | 35.48 | (55) | 38.71 | (60) | 25.81 | (40) | Opposite | L↓M↑S↓ | |
| 6 | Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 155 | 67.74 | (105) | 21.29 | (33) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |
| 7 | Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 155 | 55.48 | (86) | 22.58 | (35) | 21.94 | (34) | Same | | 9.95* |
| 8 | Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 155 | 76.13 | (118) | 21.94 | (34) | 1.94 | (3) | Same | | |
| 9 | Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 155 | 87.74 | (136) | 10.97 | (17) | 1.29 | (2) | Same | | |
| 10 | Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 40.00 | (62) | 6.45 | (10) | Opposite | L↓M ↑S↑ | |
| 11 | Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 155 | 34.84 | (54) | 54.84 | (85) | 10.32 | (16) | Same | | |
| 12 | Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 155 | 60.00 | (93) | 36.13 | (56) | 3.87 | (6) | Same | | |
| 13 | Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 155 | 81.29 | (126) | 14.19 | (22) | 4.52 | (7) | Same | | |

Table 33 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 155 | 61.29 | (95) | 25.81 | (40) | 12.90 | (20) | Same | | |
| II | Composite 2: Communicating | 2170 | 60.74 | (1318) | 28.80 | (625) | 10.46 | (227) | Same | | 20.808* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Volunteering. The aggregated findings for the volunteering composite showed a small, but statistically significant difference in perceptions regarding the frequency of occurrence for volunteering items between small, medium, and large size districts ($\chi^2$ =18.188). School districts with 250-750 students (M) and with more than 750 (L) students had higher concentrations of frequently/extensively responses for volunteering activities, whereas school districts with less than 250 students tended to perceive a higher concentration of rarely/occasionally occurrences.

Three of the eight volunteering items (1, 5, and 8) showed statistical differences in the perceptions of participants from schools with different enrollment sizes and there were mixed patterns of perceptions among the groups. Small size school district respondents believed the 3 volunteering items occurred rarely/occasionally and subjects in medium and large size districts had varying

patterns regarding their perceptions of volunteering activities that took place in their districts.

Volunteering item 2 (Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children) had the highest not occurring response rate (47.74%) and was perceived not to occur the most by the respondents in the small, medium and large size school districts.

Table 34

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School District Enrollment Size

Volunteering

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school & classroom needs. | 155 | 38.06 | (59) | 41.29 | (64) | 20.65 | (32) | Opposite | L↓M↑S↓ | 12.60* |
| 2 | Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children. | 155 | 19.35 | (30) | 32.90 | (51) | 47.74 | (74) | Same | | |
| 3 | Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 155 | 46.45 | (72) | 39.35 | (61) | 14.19 | (22) | Same | | |
| 4 | Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 155 | 29.68 | (46) | 44.52 | (69) | 25.81 | (40) | Opposite | L↑M↓ S↓ | |

Table 34 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 155 | 58.71 | (91) | 30.32 | (47) | 10.97 | (17) | Opposite | L↑M↓ S↓ | 10.15* |
| 6 | Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 42.58 | (66) | 3.87 | (6) | Same | | |
| 7 | Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 155 | 25.81 | (40) | 47.10 | (73) | 27.10 | (42) | Same | | |
| 8 | Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.) | 155 | 45.16 | (70) | 43.87 | (68) | 10.97 | (17) | Opposite | L↑M↑ S↓ | 10.13* |
| III | Composite 3: Volunteering | 1240 | 39.60 | (491) | 40.24 | (499) | 20.16 | (250) | Opposite | L↑M↑ S↓ | 18.188* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Learning at Home. There were no meaningful differences among participants from districts of varying size for the learning at home composite and any of the individual items within this subcategory. The composite sub-scale did indicate that medium and large size districts perceived learning at home activities occurred frequently/extensively and small size districts perceived these activities occurred rarely/occasionally.

The survey responses for two of the learning at home activity items (items 4 and 5) indicated respondents had

opposite and mixed patterns of perceptions. Respondents, in schools of all sizes, varied in their perceptions of the frequency of activities that assist families to help students set academic goals and activities that involve interactive homework.

A small percent (10.97%) of respondents from small, medium, and large size school districts perceived learning at home item 3 (Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child) was the learning at home partnership activity that did not occur the most in their schools.

Table 35

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School District Enrollment Size

Learning at Home

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. | 155 | 42.58 | (66) | 49.68 | (77) | 7.74 | (12) | Same | | |
| 2 | Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 155 | 38.71 | (60) | 52.90 | (82) | 8.39 | (13) | Same | | |
| 3 | Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 155 | 61.94 | (96) | 27.10 | (42) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |

Table 35 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 155 | 47.74 | (74) | 43.23 | (67) | 9.03 | (14) | Opposite | L↓M↑S | |
| 5 | Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 155 | 40.65 | (63) | 50.97 | (79) | 8.39 | (13) | Opposite | L↑ M↓ S↑ | |
| IV | Composite 4: Learning at Home | 775 | 46.32 | (359) | 44.77 | (347) | 8.90 | (69) | Opposite | L↑ M↑ S↑ | |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Decision Making. The findings based on an analysis of the decision making composite sub-scale did not aggregate to a meaningful difference in perceptions regarding decision making activities that occur in small, medium and large size school districts. Neither the decision making composite or any of the 10 decision making items showed significantly different perceptions based on school district enrollment size.

The responses in two decision making activities showed subjects held opposite patterns of perceptions. Respondents in large and medium size districts perceived items 4 and 6 occurred frequently/extensively whereas respondents from small size districts perceived the activities happened on a rare or occasional basis.

Decision making item 7 possessed the highest not occurring response rate (30.97%); one third of the respondents in the school district enrollment group perceived activity item 7 did not occur the most in their schools.

Table 36

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School District Enrollment Size

Decision Making

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 155 | 79.35 | (123) | 15.48 | (24) | 5.16 | (8) | Same | | |
| 2 | Includes parent representa-tives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 155 | 65.81 | (102) | 28.39 | (44) | 5.81 | (9) | Same | | |
| 3 | Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 40.65 | (63) | 5.81 | (9) | Same | | |
| 4 | Involves parents in an organ-organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 155 | 45.16 | (70) | 44.52 | (69) | 10.32 | (16) | Opposite | L↑M↑ S↓ | |
| 5 | Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 155 | 29.68 | (46) | 49.03 | (76) | 21.29 | (33) | Same | | |
| 6 | Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 155 | 42.58 | (66) | 40.65 | (63) | 16.77 | (26) | Opposite | L↑M↑ S↓ | |
| 7 | Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 155 | 28.39 | (44) | 40.65 | (63) | 30.97 | (48) | Same | | |
| 8 | Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 155 | 27.10 | (42) | 54.84 | (85) | 18.06 | (28) | Same | | |

Table 36 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. | 155 | 59.35 | (92) | 36.77 | (57) | 3.87 | (6) | Same | | |
| 10 | Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. | 155 | 11.61 | (18) | 58.71 | (91) | 29.68 | (46) | Same | | |
| V | Composite 5: Decision Making | 1550 | 44.26 | (686) | 40.97 | (635) | 14.77 | (229) | Opposite | L↓M↑ S↓ | |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Collaborating with the Community. The aggregated findings of the collaborating with the community section of the survey showed a strong statistical difference in the perceptions of participants from small, medium, and large size districts regarding the frequency of activities for collaboration ($\chi^2 = 43.435$). Respondents from medium size districts perceived collaboration had a higher frequency of occurrence as compared with participants from large and small size school districts. Three of the Type VI activity items (4, 5, 8) proved to show statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 13.16$, $\chi^2 = 30.94$ and $\chi^2 = 10.76$, respectively) with regard to perceptions held by parents and teachers across all size school districts.

Four collaborating with the community activity type items (items 3, 6, 7, 8) showed participants held opposite patterns of perceptions. The observed differences revealed

a mixed pattern regarding the perceived frequency of occurrence among the respondents in various size districts. Subjects in larger school districts indicated greater frequencies of schools solving turf problems effectively, whereas those in medium size school districts had a higher occurrence of frequency on activity items such as offering after school programs and using community resources to enhance learning.

The highest not occurring response rate (28.39%) occurred in collaborating with the community item 4 (Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies) and this item was perceived not to occur the most by respondents in small, medium, and large size districts.

Table 37

Perceptions of Participants Relative to School District Enrollment Size

Collaborating With Community

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 155 | 33.55 | (52) | 43.87 | (68) | 22.58 | (35) | Same | | |
| 2 | Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 155 | 34.84 | (54) | 54.19 | (84) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |

Table 37 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 155 | 41.94 | (65) | 48.39 | (75) | 9.68 | (15) | Opposite | L↓M↑S↓ | |
| 4 | Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 155 | 19.35 | (30) | 52.26 | (81) | 28.39 | (44) | Same | | 13.16* |
| 5 | Opens its building for use by the community after school hours. | 155 | 73.55 | (114) | 23.23 | (36) | 3.23 | (5) | Same | | 30.94* |
| 6 | Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 155 | 54.84 | (85) | 34.84 | (54) | 10.32 | (16) | Opposite | L↓M↑S↓ | |
| 7 | Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 155 | 41.29 | (64) | 51.61 | (80) | 7.10 | (11) | Opposite | L↓M↑ S↑ | |
| 8 | Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 155 | 56.77 | (88) | 40.00 | (62) | 3.23 | (5) | Opposite | L↑M↑S↓ | 10.76* |
| VI | Composite 6: Collaborating With Community | 1240 | 44.52 | (552) | 43.55 | (540) | 11.94 | (148) | Opposite | L↓M↑S↓ | 43.435* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

## ***Perceptions of Participants Relative to Target School Community***

*Results are presented in Tables 38-43*

Parenting. The survey results for the parenting composite aggregated to a moderate statistically

significant difference in perceptions between respondents from urban, suburban and rural schools ($\chi^2$ = 38.092) in regard to the frequency of parenting activities that take place in their schools. Of the seven parenting items, three showed statistically different perceptions based on parent and teacher responses from the three school community types. Responses from participants in urban school districts indicated a higher frequency of occurrence for parenting activities than those from rural and suburban schools.

Parenting item 5 (Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families) had the highest not occurring response rate (45.28%) and was perceived not to occur the most by the target community school groups.

Table 38

Perceptions of Participants Relative to Target School Community

Parenting

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | 155 | 26.45 | (41) | 57.42 | (89) | 16.13 | (25) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 14.03* |

Table 38 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | 155 | 29.03 | (45) | 58.71 | (91) | 12.26 | (19) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 9.57* |
| 3 | Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | 155 | 58.06 | (90) | 39.35 | (61) | 2.58 | (4) | Same | | |
| 4 | Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | 155 | 38.06 | (59) | 51.61 | (80) | 10.32 | (16) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |
| 5 | Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families. | 155 | 7.74 | (12) | 49.68 | (77) | 42.58 | (66) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 15.48* |
| 6 | Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 155 | 28.39 | (44) | 54.19 | (84) | 17.42 | (27) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |
| 7 | Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 155 | 70.32 | (109) | 23.23 | (36) | 6.45 | (10) | Same | | |
| I | Composite 1: Parenting | 1085 | 36.87 | (400) | 47.74 | (518) | 15.39 | (167) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 38.092* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Communicating. The aggregated findings of the communicating composite showed a modest statistically significant difference in perceptions ($\chi^2 = 20.271$) among

study participants in urban, suburban, and rural schools, and participants across the three groups indicated communication activities occurred frequently/extensively (60.74%). None of the 14 communicating items, within this type 2 category, showed statistically significant differences in the perceptions of participants from the three target school communities.

Participants in the target school communities had opposite perceptions of the frequency of occurrence for two communication items. Participants from urban communities perceived annual surveys were conducted and training opportunities to build ties with the community occurred on a frequent or extensive basis whereas participants from rural and suburban communities perceived these activities occurred rarely/occasionally.

Communicating item 2 (Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type) had the highest not occurring response rate (26.45%).

| Table 39 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Participants Relative to Target School Community | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Communicating | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 155 | 63.87 | (99) | 33.55 | (52) | 2.58 | (4) | Same | | |
| 2 | Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 155 | 25.16 | (39) | 48.39 | (75) | 26.45 | (41) | Same | | |
| 3 | Establishes clear two-way channels for communica-tions from home to school and from school to home. | 155 | 77.42 | (120) | 21.29 | (33) | 1.29 | (2) | Same | | |
| 4 | Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 155 | 70.32 | (109) | 13.55 | (21) | 16.13 | (25) | Same | | |
| 5 | Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 155 | 35.48 | (55) | 38.71 | (60) | 25.81 | (40) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |
| 6 | Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 155 | 67.74 | (105) | 21.29 | (33) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |
| 7 | Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 155 | 55.48 | (86) | 22.58 | (35) | 21.94 | (34) | Same | | |
| 8 | Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 155 | 76.13 | (118) | 21.94 | (34) | 1.94 | (3) | Same | | |

Table 39 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 155 | 87.74 | (136) | 10.97 | (17) | 1.29 | (2) | Same | | |
| 10 | Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 40.00 | (62) | 6.45 | (10) | Same | | |
| 11 | Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 155 | 34.84 | (54) | 54.84 | (85) | 10.32 | (16) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |
| 12 | Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 155 | 60.00 | (93) | 36.13 | (56) | 3.87 | (6) | Same | | |
| 13 | Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 155 | 81.29 | (126) | 14.19 | (22) | 4.52 | (7) | Same | | |
| 14 | Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 155 | 61.29 | (95) | 25.81 | (40) | 12.90 | (20) | Same | | |
| II | Composite 2: Communicating | 2170 | 60.74 | (1318) | 28.80 | (625) | 10.46 | (227) | Same | | 20.271* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Volunteering. The volunteering composite proved to show a substantial statistically significant difference between the perception of participants in urban, suburban, and rural school communities regarding the frequency of volunteering items ($X^2 = 39.178$) occurring in their schools.

Suburban and urban school community respondents perceived volunteering activities occurred frequently/extensively as compared with rural school community participants whose perceptions indicated volunteering activities were a rare occurrence in their schools.

All but two of the volunteering items showed urban, suburban, and rural school respondents had opposite patterns of perceptions for the frequency of occurrence of volunteering activities taking place in their school community and in five of the eight activity items (1,3,4,7,8) respondents living in rural school communities perceived these activities occurred rarely/occasionally.

The highest not occurring response rate (47.74%) was in volunteering item 2 (Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children). The three target school community groups agreed this activity occurs least of all in their schools.

| Table 40 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Participants Relative to Target School Community | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Volunteering | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school and classroom needs. | 155 | 38.06 | (59) | 41.29 | (64) | 20.65 | (32) | Opposite | R↓S↑U↓ | |
| 2 | Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children. | 155 | 19.35 | (30) | 32.90 | (51) | 47.74 | (74) | Same | | |
| 3 | Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 155 | 46.45 | (72) | 39.35 | (61) | 14.19 | (22) | Opposite | R↓S↑U↑ | |
| 4 | Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 155 | 29.68 | (46) | 44.52 | (69) | 25.81 | (40) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |
| 5 | Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 155 | 58.71 | (91) | 30.32 | (47) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |
| 6 | Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 42.58 | (66) | 3.87 | (6) | Opposite | R↑S↑U↓ | |
| 7 | Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 155 | 25.81 | (40) | 47.10 | (73) | 27.10 | (42) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 19.50* |

Table 40 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.) | 155 | 45.16 | (70) | 43.87 | (68) | 10.97 | (17) | Opposite | R↓S↑U↑ | 15.41* |
| III | Composite 3: Volunteering | 1240 | 39.60 | (491) | 40.24 | (499) | 20.16 | (250) | Opposite | R↓S↑U↑ | 39.178* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Learning at Home. The aggregated findings for the learning at home activity composite showed a small statistical difference between the perception of participants in urban, suburban, and rural school communities regarding the frequency of learning at home items ($\chi^2 = 18.367$) occurring in their schools. Suburban and urban school community respondents perceived learning at home activities occurred frequently/extensively whereas rural community respondents perceived learning at home activities occurred rarely/occasionally.

The participants from urban school communities perceived learning at home activities took place on a frequent or extensive basis and participants from rural school communities perceived these same activities occurred rarely/occasionally. There were small but statistically significant results for activity item 2 (Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist

students with skills that they need to know). Participants in urban school communities indicated this activity occurred frequently/extensively as compared to rural and suburban school community members who perceived a rare or occasional occurrence for this partnership activity.

A small percent (10.97%) of respondents from the target school community groups perceived learning at home item 3 (Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child) as the activity least likely to occur in their schools.

Table 41

Perceptions of Participants Relative to Target School Community

Learning at Home

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. | 155 | 42.58 | (66) | 49.68 | (77) | 7.74 | (12) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |
| 2 | Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 155 | 38.71 | (60) | 52.90 | (82) | 8.39 | (13) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 10.48* |
| 3 | Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 155 | 61.94 | (96) | 27.10 | (42) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |

Table 41 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 155 | 47.74 | (74) | 43.23 | (67) | 9.03 | (14) | Opposite | R↓S↑U↑ | |
| 5 | Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 155 | 40.65 | (63) | 50.97 | (79) | 8.39 | (13) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |
| IV | Composite 4: Learning at Home | 775 | 46.32 | (359) | 44.77 | (347) | 8.90 | (69) | Opposite | R↓S↑U↑ | 18.367* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Decision Making. The aggregated findings in the decision making composite showed a moderate statistically significant difference ($X^2$ =32.544) across groups of urban, suburban, and rural school community participants in their perceptions regarding decision making activities occurring in their schools. Suburban and urban respondents perceived that decision making activities had a frequent or extensive occurrence in their schools, whereas rural participants perceived this occurred rarely/occasionally.

Three of the ten decision making activity items (5, 6, and 7) had small, but statistically significant differences in the perceived frequency of occurrence for these Type V partnership activities and the differences varied according to school community type. For example, participants from suburban schools indicated their schools frequently or extensively engaged parents in the planning, review and

improvement of school programs. Subjects from rural and urban communities indicated a higher frequency of parents from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups serving as school leaders.

Decision making item 7 (Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives) had the highest not occurring response rate (30.97%) and was perceived not to occur the most by the target community response groups.

Table 42

Perceptions of Participants Relative to Target School Community

Decision Making

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 155 | 79.35 | (123) | 15.48 | (24) | 5.16 | (8) | Same | | |
| 2 | Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 155 | 65.81 | (102) | 28.39 | (44) | 5.81 | (9) | Same | | |
| 3 | Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 40.65 | (63) | 5.81 | (9) | Same | | |
| 4 | Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 155 | 45.16 | (70) | 44.52 | (69) | 10.32 | (16) | Opposite | R↓S↑U↑ | |
| 5 | Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 155 | 29.68 | (46) | 49.03 | (76) | 21.29 | (33) | Same | | 10.46* |

Table 42 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 155 | 42.58 | (66) | 40.65 | (63) | 16.77 | (26) | Opposite | R↑S↓U↑ | 11.57* |
| 7 | Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 155 | 28.39 | (44) | 40.65 | (63) | 30.97 | (48) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 13.78* |
| 8 | Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 155 | 27.10 | (42) | 54.84 | (85) | 18.06 | (28) | Same | | |
| 9 | Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. | 155 | 59.35 | (92) | 36.77 | (57) | 3.87 | (6) | Same | | |
| 10 | Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. | 155 | 11.61 | (18) | 58.71 | (91) | 29.68 | (46) | Same | | |
| V | Composite 5: Decision Making | 1550 | 44.26 | (686) | 40.97 | (635) | 14.77 | (229) | Opposite | R↓S↑U↑ | 32.544* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Collaborating with the Community. The findings of the collaborating with the community composite sub-scale aggregated to a substantial statistical difference ($\chi^2$ = 30.507) when survey responses from urban, suburban, and rural school communities were analyzed. Respondents from the suburban and urban school communities perceived collaboration with the community activities occurred frequently/extensively whereas respondents from the rural school communities perceived they occurred rarely/ occasionally. Two of the 8 collaborating with the community

activities (items 1, 4) proved to show small statistical differences regarding the frequency of occurrence within school communities. Participants in urban school communities perceived a greater frequency of occurrence for their schools to provide "one stop" shopping for services and to provide a resource directory through school/ community partnership liaisons.

However, the highest not occurring response rate (28.39%) was in collaborating with the community item 4 (Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies). The study participants in suburban and rural school communities rated this activity item as the one that occurs the least of all.

Table 43

Perceptions of Participants Relative to Target School Community

Collaborating With Community

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 155 | 33.55 | (52) | 43.87 | (68) | 22.58 | (35) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 12.89* |
| 2 | Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 155 | 34.84 | (54) | 54.19 | (84) | 10.97 | (17) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |

Table 43 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 155 | 41.94 | (65) | 48.39 | (75) | 9.68 | (15) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |
| 4 | Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 155 | 19.35 | (30) | 52.26 | (81) | 28.39 | (44) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 11.61* |
| 5 | Opens its building for use by the community after school hours. | 155 | 73.55 | (114) | 23.23 | (36) | 3.23 | (5) | Same | | |
| 6 | Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 155 | 54.84 | (85) | 34.84 | (54) | 10.32 | (16) | Same | | |
| 7 | Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 155 | 41.29 | (64) | 51.61 | (80) | 7.10 | (11) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | |
| 8 | Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 155 | 56.77 | (88) | 40.00 | (62) | 3.23 | (5) | Same | | |
| VI | Composite 6: Collaborating with Community | 1240 | 44.52 | (552) | 43.55 | (540) | 11.94 | (148) | Opposite | R↓S↓U↑ | 30.507* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

## Perceptions of Participants Relative to Socioeconomic Level of Community

*Results are presented in Tables 44-49*

Parenting. The composite sub-scale in the parenting section of the survey indicated respondents living in low, middle, and high socioeconomic school communities had

different perceptions regarding the frequency of occurrence of parenting activities in their schools and these disparate perceptions resulted in a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 51.024$) for this Type I partnership activity.

Of the seven parenting items in this section of the survey, five items showed significantly different perceptions among the low, middle, and high socioeconomic study group participants. Overall, participants in the high socioeconomic group in this study perceived parenting activities occurred frequently/extensively whereas participants in the low and middle socioeconomic groups perceived these items occurred rarely/occasionally.

Parenting item 5 had the highest not occurring response rate (45.28%). There was agreement about the lack of occurrence of home visits or neighborhood meetings among the various socioeconomic groups.

Table 44

Perceptions of Participants Relative to Socioeconomic Level of Community

Parenting

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | 155 | 26.45 | (41) | 57.42 | (89) | 16.13 | (25) | Same | | 10.61* |

Table 44 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | 155 | 29.03 | (45) | 58.71 | (91) | 12.26 | (19) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↓ | 18.39* |
| 3 | Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | 155 | 58.06 | (90) | 39.35 | (61) | 2.58 | (4) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 17.26* |
| 4 | Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | 155 | 38.06 | (59) | 51.61 | (80) | 10.32 | (16) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↓ | |
| 5 | Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families | 155 | 7.74 | (12) | 49.68 | (77) | 42.58 | (66) | Same | | |
| 6 | Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 155 | 28.39 | (44) | 54.19 | (84) | 17.42 | (27) | Same | | 12.20* |
| 7 | Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 155 | 70.32 | (109) | 23.23 | (36) | 6.45 | (10) | Same | | 19.52* |
| I | Composite 1: Parenting | 1085 | 36.87 | (400) | 47.74 | (518) | 15.39 | (167) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↓ | 51.024* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = p = < 0.05.

Communicating. The aggregated findings of the communications section of the survey showed a modest statistically significant difference ($\chi^2$ = 33.353) in perceptions between the respondent groups regarding frequency of occurrence for communicating activities. Overall, participants in the three socioeconomic school groups held the same perception that communication

activities occurred on a frequent/extensive basis in their schools. Only 1 of the 14 items in this activity category (item 13) generated a statistical difference among the survey activities associated with partnership practices that involve communication and there was agreement among the groups that the production of a school newsletter occurred frequently/extensively.

Communicating item 2 (Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type) had the highest not occurring response rate( 26.45%); approximately one quarter of the respondents in the school community socioeconomic response groups perceived this partnership activity did not occur the most in their schools.

Table 45

Perceptions of Participants Relative to Socioeconomic Level of Community

Communicating

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 155 | 63.87 | (99) | 33.55 | (52) | 2.58 | (4) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | |
| 2 | Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 155 | 25.16 | (39) | 48.39 | (75) | 26.45 | (41) | Same | | |

Table 45 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Establishes clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home. | 155 | 77.42 | (120) | 21.29 | (33) | 1.29 | (2) | Same | | |
| 4 | Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 155 | 70.32 | (109) | 13.55 | (21) | 16.13 | (25) | Same | | |
| 5 | Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 155 | 35.48 | (55) | 38.71 | (60) | 25.81 | (40) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↓ | |
| 6 | Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 155 | 67.74 | (105) | 21.29 | (33) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |
| 7 | Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 155 | 55.48 | (86) | 22.58 | (35) | 21.94 | (34) | Same | | |
| 8 | Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 155 | 76.13 | (118) | 21.94 | (34) | 1.94 | (3) | Same | | |
| 9 | Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 155 | 87.74 | (136) | 10.97 | (17) | 1.29 | (2) | Same | | |
| 10 | Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 40.00 | (62) | 6.45 | (10) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | |
| 11 | Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 155 | 34.84 | (54) | 54.84 | (85) | 10.32 | (16) | Same | | |
| 12 | Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 155 | 60.00 | (93) | 36.13 | (56) | 3.87 | (6) | Same | | |

Table 45 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 155 | 81.29 | (126) | 14.19 | (22) | 4.52 | (7) | Same | | 9.86* |
| 14 | Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 155 | 61.29 | (95) | 25.81 | (40) | 12.90 | (20) | Same | | |
| II | Composite 2: Communicating | 2170 | 60.74 | (1318) | 28.80 | (625) | 10.46 | (227) | Same | | 33.353* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Volunteering. The findings of the volunteering composite aggregated to a strong statistically significant difference in perceptions between the respondent groups ($\chi^2 = 78.966$). There was a difference in the perceptions among the high, middle, and low socioeconomic groups regarding frequency of occurrence for volunteering items. Overall, participants in high socioeconomic groups perceived volunteering activities occurred frequently/extensively whereas participants in low and middle socioeconomic groups perceived these items occurred rarely/occasionally. Of the eight volunteering items, seven proved to show statistically significant different perceptions between the three school community socioeconomic respondent groups.

Of the 8 volunteering items in this sub-scale, six showed the respondent groups possessed opposite patterns of perceptions with low socioeconomic groups consistently perceiving volunteering activities occurred rarely/ occasionally.

The highest not occurring response rate (47.74%) occurred in volunteering item 2 (Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children) by the three school community socioeconomic response groups.

Table 46

Perceptions of Participants Relative to Socioeconomic Level of Community

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/talents with school and classroom needs. | 155 | 38.06 | (59) | 41.29 | (64) | 20.65 | (32) | Opposite | H↓L↓M↑ | 12.26* |
| 2 | Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children | 155 | 19.35 | (30) | 32.90 | (51) | 47.74 | (74) | Same | | 13.78* |

Table 46 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 155 | 46.45 | (72) | 39.35 | (61) | 14.19 | (22) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 12.84* |
| 4 | Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 155 | 29.68 | (46) | 44.52 | (69) | 25.81 | (40) | Same | | 12.98* |
| 5 | Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 155 | 58.71 | (91) | 30.32 | (47) | 10.97 | (17) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 21.40* |
| 6 | Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 42.58 | (66) | 3.87 | (6) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | |
| 7 | Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 155 | 25.81 | (40) | 47.10 | (73) | 27.10 | (42) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↓ | 18.16* |
| 8 | Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.) | 155 | 45.16 | (70) | 43.87 | (68) | 10.97 | (17) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 12.17* |
| III | Composite 3: Volunteering | 1240 | 39.60 | (491) | 40.24 | (499) | 20.16 | (250) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 78.966* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Learning at Home. The learning at home composite aggregated to a small significant difference in perceptions between the respondent groups ($\chi^2 = 17.266$) and there was a difference in the perceptions of the socioeconomic groups regarding frequency of occurrence for learning at home items. Overall, participants in the three school community

socioeconomic respondent groups had differing patterns of perception for the frequency of occurrence of learning at home activity items. High and middle socioeconomic group respondents perceived learning at home activities occurred frequently/extensively whereas the low socioeconomic group perceived they occurred rarely/occasionally. Of the five learning at home activities, none showed significantly different perceptions between low, middle, and high community socioeconomic respondent groups.

Table 47

*Perceptions of Participants Relative to Socioeconomic Level of Community*

Learning at Home

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. | 155 | 42.58 | (66) | 49.68 | (77) | 7.74 | (12) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↓ | |
| 2 | Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 155 | 38.71 | (60) | 52.90 | (82) | 8.39 | (13) | Same | | |
| 3 | Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 155 | 61.94 | (96) | 27.10 | (42) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |
| 4 | Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 155 | 47.74 | (74) | 43.23 | (67) | 9.03 | (14) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | |

Table 47 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 155 | 40.65 | (63) | 50.97 | (79) | 8.39 | (13) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↓ | |
| IV | Composite 4: Learning At Home | 775 | 46.32 | (359) | 44.77 | (347) | 8.90 | (69) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 17.266* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

A small percent (10.97%) of respondents from the high, middle, and low school community socioeconomic groups perceived learning at home item 3 (Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child) occurs the least of all in their schools.

Decision Making. The survey findings for the decision making composite aggregated to a strong statistically significant difference in perceptions among the respondent groups ($\chi^2 = 78.767$) and there was a difference in the perceptions of the socioeconomic groups regarding frequency of occurrence for decision making items. Overall, participants in the three respondent socioeconomic groups had differing patterns of responses regarding decision making. High and middle school community socioeconomic group respondents perceived decision making activities

occurred frequently/extensively and low socioeconomic group respondents perceived they occurred rarely/occasionally. Of the ten decision-making items, seven showed statistically significantly different perceptions among low, middle, and high school community socioeconomic respondent groups.

Of the ten decision making items, four items (items 3, 4, 6, 9) showed differing patterns of perceptions regarding the frequency of occurrence for these decision making activities across high, middle, and low socioeconomic respondent groups. High and middle socioeconomic groups perceived the four decision making activities occurred frequently/extensively whereas low socioeconomic group respondents perceived they occurred rarely/occasionally.

Decision making item 7 (Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives) possessed the highest not occurring response rate and this partnership activity was perceived not to occur the most by the school community socioeconomic response groups when it comes to the implementation of decision making activities in their schools.

| Table 48 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceptions of Participants Relative to Socioeconomic Level of Community | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Decision Making | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 155 | 79.35 | (123) | 15.48 | (24) | 5.16 | (8) | Same | | 20.85* |
| 2 | Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 155 | 65.81 | (102) | 28.39 | (44) | 5.81 | (9) | Same | | 12.64* |
| 3 | Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 155 | 53.55 | (83) | 40.65 | (63) | 5.81 | (9) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 13.98* |
| 4 | Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 155 | 45.16 | (70) | 44.52 | (69) | 10.32 | (16) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 15.13* |
| 5 | Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 155 | 29.68 | (46) | 49.03 | (76) | 21.29 | (33) | Same | | |
| 6 | Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 155 | 42.58 | (66) | 40.65 | (63) | 16.77 | (26) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 12.17* |
| 7 | Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 155 | 28.39 | (44) | 40.65 | (63) | 30.97 | (48) | Same | | 13.03* |
| 8 | Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 155 | 27.10 | (42) | 54.84 | (85) | 18.06 | (28) | Same | | |
| 9 | Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. | 155 | 59.35 | (92) | 36.77 | (57) | 3.87 | (6) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | |

Table 48 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. | 155 | 11.61 | (18) | 58.71 | (91) | 29.68 | (46) | Same | | 17.96* |
| V | Composite 5: Decision making | 1550 | 44.26 | (686) | 40.97 | (635) | 14.77 | (229) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 78.767* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

Collaborating with the Community. The survey findings for the collaborating with community composite aggregated to a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 32.111$) in perceptions between the respondent groups and there was a moderate statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the socioeconomic groups, regarding frequency of occurrence for collaborating with the community activity items. Overall, participants in high and middle socioeconomic groups perceived parenting activities occurred frequently/extensively whereas participants in low socioeconomic groups perceived these activities occurred rarely/occasionally. Of the eight collaborating with community items, three proved to show statistically significantly differences in the perceptions among low, middle, and high community socioeconomic respondent groups.

Of the eight collaborating with community items, three showed the socioeconomic respondent groups possessed differing patterns of perceptions. Middle and high

socioeconomic groups generally perceived that these three collaborating with community items occurred frequently/ extensively and the low socioeconomic group respondents perceived the same three collaborating with community activities occurred rarely/occasionally.

Collaborating with the community item 4 (Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies) possessed the highest not occurring response rate (28.39%) and nearly one third of the respondents in the high, middle, and low socioeconomic groups perceived this partnership activity did not occur the most in their schools.

Table 49

Perceptions of Participants Relative to Socioeconomic Level of Community

Collaborating With Community

| Item No. | Statement Regarding Perceptions of Partnership | | Frequently or Extensively | | Rarely or Occasionally | | Not Occurring | | Pattern | | $X^2$ (df=4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | n | % | (n) | % | (n) | % | (n) | | | |
| 1 | Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 155 | 33.55 | (52) | 43.87 | (68) | 22.58 | (35) | Same | | |
| 2 | Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 155 | 34.84 | (54) | 54.19 | (84) | 10.97 | (17) | Same | | |

Table 49 (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Works with local businesses, industries, & community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 155 | 41.94 | (65) | 48.39 | (75) | 9.68 | (15) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | |
| 4 | Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 155 | 19.35 | (30) | 52.26 | (81) | 28.39 | (44) | Same | | |
| 5 | Opens its building for use by the community after school hours. | 155 | 73.55 | (114) | 23.23 | (36) | 3.23 | (5) | Same | | 11.88* |
| 6 | Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 155 | 54.84 | (85) | 34.84 | (54) | 10.32 | (16) | Same | | |
| 7 | Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 155 | 41.29 | (64) | 51.61 | (80) | 7.10 | (11) | Opposite | H↓L↓M↑ | 15.70* |
| 8 | Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 155 | 56.77 | (88) | 40.00 | (62) | 3.23 | (5) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 13.82* |
| VI | Composite 6: Collaborating with Community | 1240 | 44.52 | (552) | 43.55 | (540) | 11.94 | (148) | Opposite | H↑L↓M↑ | 32.111* |

Note: = more respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; = fewer respondents chose frequently or extensively compared to rarely or occasionally; underline = less than 50% of the group chose frequently or extensively; L= large district; M = medium district; S= small district; U = urban; S = suburban; R = rural; H = High income; M = middle income; L = low income; Same = respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively group or rarely/occasionally group; Opposite = not all respondent groups had a higher percentage of responses in the frequently/extensively or rarely/occasionally group; * = $p = < 0.05$.

## Demographic Make Up of Respondents

*Results are presented in Table 50*

The self reported demographic profiles described a high concentration of respondents from large enrollment districts (65.16%). Elementary school teachers and parents comprised the majority of the respondents for this study at

approximately (59.35%) and middle socioeconomic level was the primary classification for school communities (68.39%).

Demographic stratification of the respondents proved limiting in the urban areas (7** respondents), in small enrollment districts of less than 250 students (10** respondents), and in school communities with high socioeconomic levels (17** respondents). It was determined not to generalize these demographic characterizations together for the analysis as all were originally determined to be of interest prior to the study.

**Table 50**
**Respondent Demographic Concentrations**

| District Enrollment Size (1) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Categories | | % | (n) |
| L | Less than 250 students | 6.45 | (10**) |
| S | 250-750 students | 28.39 | (44) |
| M | More than 750 students | 65.16 | (101) |

| Primary Grade Level (2) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Categories | | % | (n) |
| E | Elementary | 59.35 | (92) |
| S | Secondary | 40.65 | (63) |

| Target School Community (3) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Categories | | % | (n) |
| R | Rural Area | 52.26 | (81) |
| S | Suburban Area | 43.23 | (67) |
| U | Urban Area | 4.52 | (7**) |

| Community Socioeconomic Level (4) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Categories | | % | (n) |
| H | High | 10.97 | (17**) |
| M | Middle | 68.39 | (106) |
| L | Low | 20.65 | (32) |

Chapter V discusses the findings, generalizability, implications, and limitations of the study. Additionally, it offers recommendations for further research.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS, SIGNIFICANCE, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Introduction

This study replicated Stephen Schulte's (2004) investigation of school-family-community partnership programs in South Dakota. Like Schulte's work, the current study measured variability in the perceptions of four groups of public school teachers and parents of public school students about the extent to which exemplary partnership practices were being implemented at their respective schools. This investigation used the same research design and data-gathering instrument with a study sample drawn from New Hampshire public schools. However, it used a different statistical procedure than that employed by Schulte.

In this study, a total of 155 (N = 155) subjects completed a 52 item, forced response survey instrument that asked participants to indicate the frequency with which specific activities associated with one of the six categories in Epstein's school partnership model, were

being conducted at the schools in which they worked or that their children attended. Participants were recruited from 42 randomly selected New Hampshire school districts and the initial sampling universes for both teacher and parent participants were constructed through a multi-stage random sampling procedure. The study's final sample was comprised of (1) 49 elementary school teachers, (2) 36 secondary school teachers, (3) 43 parents of elementary school students and (4) 27 parents of secondary school students. The core statistical analysis compared frequency of response types among four pairs of groups. These parings were (a) elementary teachers with secondary teachers; (b) parents of elementary school students with parents of secondary school students; (c) elementary school teachers with parents of elementary school students; and (d) secondary schools teachers with parents of secondary school students. The analysis yielded measures of statistical difference within each pair of groups on the survey instrument's six activity type sub-scales and for all of its 52 partnership activities. The criteria for statistical significance was set at the alpha level of $p = <0.05$.

The results of the study were used to test four null hypotheses. The first of these hypotheses stated that there

would be no significant differences between the perceptions of elementary school teachers and the perceptions of secondary school teachers about the extent that any of the exemplary activities in any of the six school partnership categories had been implemented. Since significant variability was found between the responses of these two groups, this hypothesis was rejected. Similar null hypotheses comparing the perceptions of parents of elementary school students with the perceptions of parents of secondary school students and the perceptions of parents of secondary school students with the perceptions of secondary school teachers were also rejected. The study's fourth hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences between the perceptions of the parents of elementary school students and the perceptions of elementary school teachers about the extent to which any of exemplary activities in any of the six partnership categories had been implemented. This hypothesis was confirmed. Although there was a modest difference between these two study groups on one of the instrument's activity type scales (Type 3 "Volunteering"), no statistically significant inter-group differences were found on any of its 52 items.

A comparison of the findings among groups in this study with those reported by Schulte with his South Dakota sample, revealed more differences than similarities. As was seen in Schulte's work, this investigation did find significant variation in the perceptions of elementary and secondary school teachers. However, while Schulte reported significant differences between elementary teachers and elementary school parents, in this study the differences between these two groups were negligible. Also, Schulte did not detect statistically significant differences between elementary school parents and secondary school parents. In contrast, this study found that inter-group differences in the perceptions of partnership activities were greater for this set of paired groups than those found for any of the other three paired group sets. Additionally, Schulte's survey results did not reveal significant differences between secondary school teachers and secondary school parents. In this study, relatively moderate but significant differences were observed between these two groups.

In addition to testing the formal hypotheses concerning the differences in perceptions of partnership activities between study groups, Schulte used his study's results to assess the extent to which the schools represented within his sample were implementing the

partnership model that had been adopted by the South Dakota Coalition of Schools. Since all of the schools in Schulte's study were members of that alliance, he anticipated that the participants' responses would indicate frequent and/or extensive implementation for most of the partnership practices embodied in the survey instrument. He found numerous and substantial gaps between the activities suggested for partnership engagement practices and their actual use by analyzing the responses of the total sample and the four groups within it. Based on his analysis of the data, Schulte observed that, for many of the exemplary partnership activities measured by the study instrument, a majority of the participants indicated that they were either not occurring at all or were taking place only rarely/occasionally as opposed to frequently or extensively.

In Schulte's study there was a remarkably high degree of convergence among participants on the absence or the low frequency of several partnership engagement practices. Schulte found that those partnership activities that required public school personnel to exert a high degree of effort in reaching out to parents and actively engaging them in their children's education received disappointingly low frequency of use ratings from the study's subjects. For

example, the majority of respondents in all four of Schulte's study groups indicated that their schools were not conducting sponsored home visits and that the assignment of interactive homework was either infrequently used or not taking place. Based on this informal evaluation, Schulte concluded that "efforts by schools and teachers are not being made to create an 'extended hand' to families outside the environment of the school where the environment cannot be controlled" (p. 94).

This 2009 replication revealed a similar implementation pattern to Schulte's findings. Based on the responses of the entire study sample, the conclusion reached is that the implementation of the school-parent-community partnership model within New Hampshire public schools is deficient within most of the schools and it is largely confined to activities conducted on school grounds. There was a high degree of similarity between Schulte's study results for specific activities and those found in this investigation. In this study, most of the subjects indicated that sponsored home visits were not occurring; that interactive homework assignments were infrequent; and that efforts to recruit, train, and accommodate parent volunteers were very limited. By the same token, the results suggest that communications between schools and

parents were fairly vigorous (at least at the elementary grade level), but they also suggested that the flow of information was predominately restricted to communiqués from schools to student homes. In contrast, face-to-face, teacher-parent exchanges appeared to be infrequent and school personnel did not extensively solicit information from the parents of their students. On the whole, this study's findings for the extent and the pattern of partnership activity implementation mirrors the program implementation characteristics reported by Schulte.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into five sections. The next chapter section, Section II, provides an overview of responses across all of the study's four subject groups. These findings are presented early in the chapter to furnish the reader with a background from which paired study group comparisons can be made. The section includes a brief discussion of results for each of the data-gathering instrument's six sub-scales; it highlights data on individual items and makes an assessment based on relevant research findings reported in the empirical literature on school partnerships. Section II ends with an effort to interpret the aggregated findings by explaining them within three frameworks.

First, the weak implementation results are viewed as a manifestation of what organizational behavior scholar Chris Argyris (2003; Argyris & Schon, 1996) referred to as the relationship between espoused theories and theories-in-use along with Cornelis Lammers's (1967) concept of "pseudo-direct" participation within organizations. An alternative explanation is that these same weak implementation results can be attributed to the aspects of the study's design and methodology, such as the difficulties entailed in trying to assess partnership model implementation through a survey that measures select, specified exemplary activities. When the implementation deficiencies are considered from this perspective, it is possible that the schools represented in the study sample are engaging in practices that activate one or more of the partnership model's six activity categories but they are not captured through the study's data-gathering instrument. Lastly, the results regarding the general implementation of partnership practices may mask significant differences because of the use of the parent/teacher and elementary school/secondary school constructs that were used to establish the four study groups. As stated above, such differences did emerge and the findings for the study strongly suggest that the school level differences were stronger in determining the

variation of perceptions than the differences in the perceptions of teachers compared with parents.

Section III discusses the variability of findings in perceived partnership activities between two groups designated by school level. It compares the responses of 92 elementary school teachers and parents of elementary school students with those of 63 secondary school teachers and parents of high school students. The results presented in this section combine the responses obtained from the two pairs of study groups. They are compared with the findings of prior research studies that have compared the extent of school partnership program implementation at elementary schools with implementation at secondary schools.

Section IV details the results that were used to test the study's four hypotheses. This section includes analyses of differences in responses for each of the six partnership model activity types within the four pairs of study groups taken sequentially. The dispersion of values in each set of composite scores is compared to draw conclusions about the perceptions within each of the paired groups. The criteria established for the comparisons are presented in Appendix C. Schulte's (2004) study is the only other investigation that compared teacher and parent groups defined by school level. The comparisons with empirical research literature

on implementation differences by school level are covered in Section III. Consequently, this study's comparisons are considered in terms of the literature published on school partnership activity perceptions of teachers and parents.

Section V provides a discussion of the associations that were measured among three school community/school district demographic variables and the responses for the entire study sample. Subjects' self reports of household income within their communities were used to discriminate between high, middle, and low income communities. The socioeconomic variable that resulted from reports made by participants was significantly related to differences in the perceived frequency of several partnership activities and to composite scores on the instrument's six activity type scales used in this study. The findings for community socioeconomic status (SES) are compared with the existing literature on the relationship between the closely related variable of student household SES and school partnership implementation.

The second demographic variable, which was designated as "target community type," is also discussed in Section V and distinguishes among urban, suburban, and rural community settings as reported by the study participants. A third variable, school district size was measured by total

student enrollment as indicated by reports from study participants. Both the target community type and school district size factors showed some associations that were meaningful in terms of the study's survey items and with some of the composite scores. Due to the comparatively small size of the total study sample and the unbalanced distribution of responses by categories for each of these three factors, it was not possible to measure the influence of these three demographic variables on the study's main findings. However, the collective findings for these three variables strongly suggest that resource constraints at the household, school, and community levels have an impact upon the frequency of school partnership activities as perceived by parents and teachers.

The last section, Section VI, briefly summarizes the significance of the study's findings and enumerates limitations upon the validity and the generalizability of its findings. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research studies on school-community partnerships and on aspects of partnerships that appear to require additional attention from school district and school administrators.

## Aggregated Responses across Study Groups

All of the schools from which teacher and parent study participants were recruited are legally obligated to establish a school-family-community partnership program that embodies all six dimensions of the Epstein's partnership model. This mandate is now part of the No Child Left Behind Act as a condition for eligibility for federal funding and it is also inscribed in New Hampshire ED Rule 306 as promulgated by that state's Department of Education in 2005. The status given to school-community partnerships reflects findings from a wealth of research studies that have affirmed the beneficial effects of parental/family and community engagement in public schools for student academic, developmental, and behavioral outcomes, school functioning and improvement, and the well-being of community residents. When the force of law and the recognized benefits that are likely to result from full partnership program implementation are taken into consideration, the responses of the study participants to the frequency with which exemplary activities are occurring in a sample of New Hampshire schools is disappointing.

An analysis of Type 1, or the "parenting" activity type of Epstein's model, showed that the perceived

frequency of implementation of the seven exemplary activities listed in the study instrument varied substantially. In the view of teachers and parents from both elementary and secondary schools, the schools represented in this study frequently or extensively demonstrated respect for cultural diversity within their student bodies and provided information to parents that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. Nevertheless, most of the elementary and secondary level subjects stated that the schools only occasionally or rarely provided information to all families, and rarely or occasionally provided information or training about how to establish learning environments within their homes. Furthermore, schools only rarely/occasionally held informational workshops on child development and were even less likely to sponsor home visits. With regard to home visits, 42.5 percent of the participants indicated that home visits were not occurring at their elementary or secondary schools while another 49.7 percent saw their occurrence as rare or occasional. The results from the sample-wide participants for this partnership activity lend support to Schulte's assertion that public schools are not extending the scope of their parental engagement activities beyond their buildings; gaining access to parenting

resources appears to depend heavily upon parental awareness and initiative.

On the surface, the results for school-home "communications" (Type 2 activities) present a more positive impression. Across all 14 items within the communications section of the survey instrument, more than 60 percent of the elementary and secondary level study subjects indicated frequent or extensive communications. There were some exceptions to this pattern. The development of communications for parents who are not fluent in English, the training of school staff members to value the contributions of parents, and the administration of surveys to parents soliciting their input were rated as rare, infrequent or non-occurring by both groups of parents and teachers. On several items there was an inordinately high concentration of "not occurring" responses. The results also imply major variations between schools. While 55.5 percent of the subjects indicated that schools frequently/extensively sent home folders of student work on a regular basis, 22 percent indicated that this partnership practice was not taking place. The strongest result on this sub-scale was the high proportion (88 percent) of the sample participants who indicated that schools frequently/extensively contacted families of children who

were having academic or behavioral problems. Communication was occurring, but it tended to be unidirectional, with the flow from schools to homes greatly surpassing the flow of information from homes to schools.

The sub-scale for Type 3 "volunteering" activity suggested a weakness in the frequency of implementation with a 20.2 percent rate of "not occurring" responses being recorded across all eight activities. A portion of this weakness on the volunteering sub-scale was a result of 47.7 percent of the subjects who indicated that their schools did not furnish a parent/family room for volunteers. This is understandable given the likely constraints on available space within many (if not most) New Hampshire public schools. Weak ratings (including "not occurring" rates in excess of 20 percent) were recorded for conducting annual surveys of prospective parent volunteers, training volunteers, and, most especially, reducing barriers to parent participation as volunteers by providing transportation, child-care, and flexible scheduling of school activities. When considered collectively, the responses suggest that the schools represented in this study encouraged parents to become school volunteers, but secondary schools were far less likely to prepare them for service and to help them overcome barriers to volunteering

than elementary schools. On the whole, schools were not addressing what Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005, p. 123) characterized as "life-context" barriers to parental involvement in their children's schools.

Among all of the six categories of the partnership model, Type 4 "learning at home" activities had the lowest percentage of "not occurring" responses from the study sample as a whole. This suggests that the vast majority of schools represented in this study were making an effort to extend the learning process into the homes of their students. Across the five items presented in this section of the survey, rarely/occasionally subject responses were nearly as prevalent as frequently/extensively ratings. Of particular importance, only 40.6 percent of the study participants indicated that teachers assigned interactive homework on a frequent or extensive basis, and nearly 51 percent indicated that interactive homework was used only rarely or occasionally, while 8.4 percent reported that this prominent partnership practice was not being used at all.

The findings from participants in this study for Type 5 "decision-making" activities were not as weak as the responses on the volunteering sub-scale. A majority of the study participants indicated that their schools have an

active PTA/PTO and included parent representatives on advisory committees. Such participation did not extend to curriculum revisions. Most of the subjects reported that students were not included on any decision-making group and that parents of "all" different ethnic-racial and class backgrounds within the student body were not included as school leaders. Perhaps the most revealing aspect of the sample's responses to this partnership activity was the apparently low level of effort (and high proportion of "not occurring" responses) that schools exerted in creating networks between families and their parent representatives and among parents displaying variable levels of school involvement. On the whole, schools were actively supporting parental inclusion on decision-making bodies with well-defined, traditional, and limited roles but were not encouraging inter-personal parental interaction outside of formal committees.

For the sample as a whole, Type 6 "collaborating with the community" activities presented a mixed picture. As will be explained in Section V, school district size and target community type (urban, suburban, rural) variables revealed a strong correlation with this activity sub-scale and several of its 8 activity items. When the results were aggregated, it was apparent that most of the schools

appeared to be fairly active in offering the use of their buildings to community groups after school hours and in offering after school programs for students with support from outside organizations and community volunteers. Roughly half were frequently or extensively working with local businesses and organizations to improve student learning and more than half were making extensive use of community resources (local libraries, museums, and parks, etc.). The schools represented in this study did a substantially weaker job in providing a community resource directory and offering "one-stop" shopping for family services. On this activity type, the responses of the subjects suggested that the New Hampshire public schools in the sample were forming two-way connections with outside community entities but they were not serving as hubs for community networks.

As stated earlier, Schulte's (2004) study furnished evidence that the subjects that were part of his study indicated their schools had not strongly implemented several prominent partnership activities. In 2001, Joyce Epstein wrote that "most NNPS schools "still do not conduct well-developed, comprehensive programs with all six types of involvement" (p. 491) and, at that time, she described

the outlook for rapid progress as being "still bleak" (p. 6). In the largest survey of NNPS programs conducted to date, Sheldon and Van Voorhis (2004) concurred with Epstein's appraisal on the status of school partnership program implementation. Their results from 332 schools indicated that many "partnership" schools espoused community values but left the task of determining how they could become more engaged in their children's education up to the parents.

The relevant empirical literature is full of evidence that supports the existence of an array of barriers to effective school partnerships (Barnard, 2004; Christenson & Sheridan 2001; Epstein, 2001; Lawson, 2003). These include teacher and parent attitudes, stereotypical beliefs, and teacher and parent behaviors. Several scholars (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Overstreet et al., 2005) have documented the importance of parents believing that they have been invited to initiate or to increase their engagement with the schools that their children attend.

The items included on the survey instrument in this study generally tap into perceived district-wide or school-wide policies, programs, and practices as perceived by parents and teachers in the study's sample. Hoover-Dempsey

and her colleagues (2005) have noted that many parents are dissuaded from becoming more involved in public schools by "life context" constraints such as lack of knowledge needed to perform volunteer roles, limitations stemming from conflicting responsibilities, and shortages of time and energy. The studies reviewed by Hoover-Dempsey and her associates suggest that schools could lower these barriers through off-site training workshops, the flexible scheduling of school-based activities, sponsored home visits and etc. Overall, the findings for the sample as a whole imply that schools do offer "invitations," but parents must be aware of them and pick them up (usually by physically visiting schools at a time and place set by staff members). Even schools that have a commitment to the establishment of partnerships make little or no effort to lower the life context barriers that impede parents from becoming actively involved in their children's schooling.

Epstein (2001; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006) repeatedly recognized that prior to the start of the NNPS, schools did adopt family involvement policies. Nevertheless, Epstein noted that these efforts "focused mainly on the roles that parents needed to play and not the work that schools needed to do to organize strong programs to involve all families in their children's education" (2001, p. 39). It is in this

context, Argyris's (2003) distinction between "espoused theories" and "theories in use" may be germane (p.1184). As explained in a recent retrospective essay, after nearly four decades of work on organizational change, Argyris and his fellow researchers found that most organizational change initiatives, even well intentioned ones, fail for two reasons. First, despite the espousal of empowerment or shared decision-making, some individuals possessing formal power fell back on available "theories in use" supporting hierarchical values (p. 1185). Faced with challenges, these already empowered individuals defensively resort to established "processes that were self-sealing, compulsively repetitive, and non-interruptible" (p. 1184). Second, unless powerless individuals who are intended to benefit from broadened participation were engaged from the outset in the change process, they too fell back on theories in use and, again, on hierarchical value distinctions. Neither the powerful nor the powerless organizational members were disingenuous in their espousal of new models; they were, instead, accustomed to top-down, hierarchical values. Ultimately the solution to this quandary, as Arygris saw it, was to increase opportunities for "double loop" learning, facilitating the ongoing modification of the model itself in light of continuous performance feedback.

In formulating and enacting relevant programs, empowered school district and building administrators may espouse partnership theories with accompanying democratic participation values in good faith. But, without the existence of a *double loop learning mechanism* providing feedback to both school personnel and parents, Argyris's research strongly suggests that both groups will lapse into available theories in use in which parents have only supporting, subordinate roles to play in the formal education of their children.

The Dutch organizational theorist Cornelis J. Lammers (1967) presented a conception of organizational change that carries somewhat darker implications for the creation of effective school partnership programs. In his classic essay "Power and Participation in Decision-Making in Formal Organizations," Lammers noted that the participation of subordinates in organizational decision-making process depends on the style of leadership that their superiors embrace (p. 208). He observed that defensively oriented managers who seek to preserve their power often establish "pseudo-direct participation" measures (p. 209). Essentially, they create organizational structures, programs, and policies that appear to involve others in

meaningful decisions but actually divert attention from the existing, hierarchical distribution of power.

When Arygris's (2003) empirically based models of organizational change behavior are considered, the disappointing findings of this study concerning the extent to which school partnership activities have been implemented can be construed as the result of a theory in use prevailing over an espoused theory of educational practice. From Lammers's (1967) standpoint, the differences between school partnership rhetoric and its superficial implementation can be interpreted as a form of subterfuge perpetrated by defensive school officials.

But this is not the only framework in which the findings reported in this section can be interpreted. The survey instrument used in this study measures the perceived frequency of a select set of specific partnership activities. But as Epstein and her associates (2001; Epstein et al., 2002; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004, Epstein & Sheldon, 2006) have repeatedly stated, individual schools are encouraged to select activities that best meet their schools' needs, resources, and circumstances, and to devise their own practices. Several hundred partnership school practices are described within Epstein et al.'s *Handbook* (2002), while many others appear in the NNPS's prescriptive

literature (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). Epstein and her colleagues have insisted that schools should adopt activities that are addressed to all six dimensions of the partnership model, the choice of specific activities remains with the school itself.

The 52 activities contained in this study's data-gathering instrument do not exhaust the range of prospective partnership practices that schools can establish. Even within a single state, it is unlikely that individual schools will use the same roster of activities. Therefore, the seemingly "spotty" performance of the New Hampshire schools represented in this study may be a result of the study's survey design and reliance upon a standardized measuring instrument.

Even if some validity is given to this argument, the surprisingly weak frequency ratings provided by teachers and parents for some highly prominent activities and generic forms of parental involvement cannot be pushed aside because the frequency ratings indicate that there is a significant gap between partnerships in theory and in actual usage. For example, as Epstein (2007) has observed, the most common Type 4 activity is interactive homework. This either requires students to discuss their school assignments with their parents or engage parents (or other

family members) in actual completion of homework. In their 2002 review of 41 studies measuring parental involvement in school, interactive homework was cited as the most frequently measured form of learning at home in the empirical literature. However, based on the perceptions of both parents and teachers, most schools in this study were not making frequent/extensive use of interactive homework. The same can also be said for sponsored home visits, the training of volunteers, and the reduction of barriers to parental involvement in school affairs.

According to this study's main findings, the combined frequency scores for specific partnership activities may mask variability in usage between different types of schools. The findings suggest that there are major differences between elementary and secondary schools. These may stem from structural factors, such as the delivery of classroom instruction to high school students by multiple teachers working in specific subject disciplines or from a difference in the availability of school resources relative to student needs. The aggregated scores also reflect that there are items on the survey that are less important for the development of adolescents than they are for elementary school students, encouraging parents to read aloud to their children stands out as one example.

In the next section of this chapter, survey results from study groups aggregated by school level are presented. This study's findings, when viewed in terms of the study's hypotheses show that differences between elementary and secondary schools, rather than differences between teachers and parents, account for most of the observed differences within the four study pairs of study groups.

## Findings Aggregated by Elementary and Secondary School Level

In addition to testing the hypotheses for this study, the results of the survey enabled the researcher to determine if school level (elementary or secondary) influenced the perceptions held by teachers and parents on the frequency of implementation of school partnerships. In the total study sample, 92 subjects either taught or had a child enrolled at one of the New Hampshire elementary schools participating in this study and 63 participants either taught or had a child enrolled at a participating secondary school. The statistical analysis indicated that there were dramatic differences between the responses of the elementary and secondary level subjects, particularly on the Type 2 (communicating), Type 3 (volunteering) and Type 4 (learning at home) activity-types.

There was a comparatively modest difference between elementary and high school participants on the parenting sub-scale, driven chiefly by significant differences on three of its seven activity items. The 92 elementary school subjects indicated a higher frequency for producing information for families that is clear, usable and linked to student academic success. There was agreement between both groups that asking family members about their children's goals, strengths, and talents and developing home environments to support learning occurred rarely/occasionally. As will be mentioned in the next chapter section, most of the variation on these items resulted from differences in the perceptions of parents, rather than teachers.

The Type 2 communications activity type scale displayed much stronger and more consistent differences between the elementary and secondary level participants; 12 of the 14 items generated statistically significant results. Elementary school subjects indicated a higher frequency of occurrence and a lower proportion of not occurring responses for five of these twelve activities. The greatest differences by school level were found for sending home folders of student class work on a regular basis and for providing written communication in the

language of the parents. There is ample cause to believe that the variance on these two items was heavily influenced by differences in school organizational structures. Based on the perceptions of the subjects, it was patently apparent that communication between schools and homes was much lower at the high school level.

Significant differences were found between elementary and secondary school participants on the volunteering items in the survey instrument. Responses to the items contained in the volunteering activity type scale displayed the same pattern: a higher proportion of elementary school subjects indicated that each activity occurred frequently/ extensively when compared with high school study participants. Secondary school participants provided especially low frequency ratings for creating the conditions that enable parents to overcome life-context barriers that give them the opportunity to serving as school volunteers.

School level also displayed strong associations with learning at home activities. Elementary school teachers and parents perceived more frequent learning at home practices on four of the five items within the Type 4 section of the survey instrument than high school teachers and parents did. The sole exception to this pattern was a high degree

of correspondence between the two school level groups for assisting families in setting academic goals and selecting courses and programs. It is quite likely that high school guidance counseling services that help students with vocational orientation and college attendance decisions had a powerful impact on the absence of differences in subject responses to this item.

The greatest difference between the elementary and secondary school participants was found on an item asking about the frequency of school personnel making parents aware of the importance of their children's reading at home, listening to their children reading aloud, and reading aloud to their children. This survey item may have been an artifact of the perceived importance of teaching younger children to develop basic reading skills and be related to the importance of encouraging older students to continue or increase their reading. The second greatest difference was for an item asking subjects to indicate the frequency of interactive homework assignments. High school study participants were much more likely than elementary school participants to indicate that interactive homework assignments were occurring only rarely/occasionally.

School level differences on the Type 5 decision making activity type scale were not as pronounced as the

differences observed for Type 2, 3, and 4 activity type scales. Modest, but significant, differences were observed for 5 of the 10 activities in this section of the study's data-gathering instrument. In three instances, the subjects in the elementary school level group indicated higher frequencies for these partnership practices.

A moderate difference was found between the two school level groups on the Type 6 collaborating with the community sub-scale and elementary school participants indicated these partnership practices occurred frequently/extensively. The degree of variation when the results were aggregated for the 10 items in this activity type scale was much lower than that found for the school level variable on any of the other school partnership activity dimensions. Only 2 of the 8 items showed statistical significance. The elementary school subjects indicated a modestly higher level of accessing community resources such as local libraries museums, and parks than their secondary school participants did. This may have been a reflection of more frequent field trips at the elementary school level. The elementary level also showed a slightly greater frequency of after school activities conducted with support from local organizations and community volunteers. There was no difference between the elementary and

secondary school groups on working with local businesses and community organizations to enhance student skills and learning. Section V of this chapter will discuss that analysis of community socioeconomic status, district size, and target community types (urban/suburban/rural) demonstrates stronger correlations with perceived collaboration with the community activities than school level analysis did.

The school level results are broadly consistent with the empirical literature on parental involvement and school partnership programs. Numerous studies and literature reviews (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Ellis & Hughes, 2002; Mattingly et al., 2002) have reported that parental involvement in schools is inversely associated with grade level and declines dramatically after student completion of elementary school and entrance into middle or high school. Evaluation studies of NNPS programs have consistently found greater progress in school partnerships at the elementary and middle school levels when compared with secondary schools (Epstein, 2007; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Sanders & Epstein, 1999, Sanders & Simon, 2002). In their 2004 survey at 332 partnerships schools, Sheldon and Van Voorhis found elementary schools in the sample were much more frequently engaged in Type 1 through Type 4 activities than secondary

schools. The findings of this study are entirely consistent with those of Sheldon and Van Voorhis for these four categories of the school partnership model. On the other hand, Sheldon and Van Voorhis also reported that high schools were more likely to engage parents in decision-making activities and to collaborate with the community than elementary schools.

As Schulte (2004) observed in his study, the comparatively lower rate of parental school engagement found at secondary schools is a consequence of multiple factors. Both parents and school personnel (including teachers) may feel that older students do not require as much home support to be successful in school as younger students. They may also believe that parents are less able to assist children in acquiring the higher order skills and mastering the more difficult and specialized course content/instructional materials found at high schools. Many parents may be able to participate in elementary grade mathematics or science homework but lack the knowledge to help their adolescent children with lessons in calculus or physics.

But the most pronounced reason for less parental involvement in high school partnership activities revolves around the organization of instructional delivery.

Elementary school students are typically taught by a single teacher, who has the primary responsibility for the education of 20 to 35 students. Secondary school students are instructed by multiple teachers who are responsible for only a portion of the education provided to hundreds of students. Interpersonal communication, interaction, and bonds among elementary school teachers, their students, and the families of those students are apt to be much stronger than those found at the high school level. In response to these multiple factors, administrators at secondary schools and district personnel may be less fully disposed from enacting programs and policies that require or facilitate Type 1 through Type 4 school partnership activities.

## Discussion of Findings for the Study's Hypotheses

### Elementary School and Secondary School Teachers Comparisons

The findings used to test the study's four hypotheses were based on comparisons between participant groups in four paired sets. The first set compared the responses of 49 elementary school teachers with those of 36 secondary school teachers.

The differences between the responses of elementary teachers and secondary school teachers on the parenting dimension of survey instrument were significant but comparatively modest. This was one of only two activity types within the school partnership model in which teacher

or parent grade level did not strongly associate with participant response patterns. No significant differences were found between the two groups on any of the seven items within the parenting activity type scale. There was one "opposite" pattern: a majority of the elementary teacher subjects indicated that their school frequently/ extensively, produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success at home in contrast to a minority of secondary school teachers. There was strong agreement between primary and secondary school teachers on the low frequency (and non-occurrence) of home visits and the high proportion of subjects in both groups who checked the frequent or extensive response categories for the respects cultural diversity item.

Substantially greater differences were found between elementary and secondary school teachers' perceptions of school partnership communication activities. Significant variability was found between the two groups on six of the 14 items in the communications portion of the survey; in two cases, elementary school teachers were more likely to indicate these activities occurred frequently/extensively and less likely to provide a not occurring response compared with their secondary school teachers. The largest observed differences were found for sending student work

folders home and conducting annual parent-teacher conference items. Here, as in all of the pair-wise comparisons, the strongest degree of correspondence between the two groups was on notification of parents about a student's academic or behavioral problems. There was also a high degree of convergence between the two study groups on the production of school newsletters, which was perceived by teachers to be equally prevalent at the elementary and secondary levels.

There were very strong differences in the perceptions of elementary and secondary school teachers on the volunteering component of partnership model; statistically significant differences were reported for 6 of the 8 items in the volunteering activity type and each indicated greater and more consistent activity at the elementary level. Elementary teachers perceived a much higher frequency of activities to encourage families and the community to be involved at their schools than the secondary school teachers did. Differences for the volunteering activity scale would have been greater but were affected by three items in the volunteering category. As indicated by the teacher responses, most schools (elementary and secondary) did not provide a parent family room, train volunteers extensively or frequently, or reduce

barriers to parental volunteering by providing childcare, transportation and the like on a frequent or extensive basis.

According to the teachers who participated in the study, school grade level is related to the perceived frequency of learning at home activities, with 4 of the 5 items generating a significant amount of difference between elementary and secondary school educators. "Not occurring" responses were rare across all items. As might be expected, elementary school teachers provided a higher concentration of frequently/extensively responses on the importance of promoting student reading at home, while a majority of secondary school teachers perceived only rare or occasional efforts by their schools to promote the importance of reading at home. Elementary school teachers indicated a greater frequency of interactive homework assignments. The difference was not strong, but a (slight) majority of the elementary school teachers indicated frequent/extensive use of interactive homework while a majority of the secondary school teachers checked the rarely or the occasionally response category for this item.

Only a small degree of teacher inter-group variation was found for the decision-making section of the survey. Of the 10 items encompassed in this sub-scale, three exhibited

statistical significance, but comparatively small, differences. There were several items on this school partnership dimension that had very high proportions of "not occurring" responses from both elementary and secondary school teachers. Items asking about formal networks between parents and school representatives and requesting that more active parents contact less engaged parents were most prominent in the "not occurring" category.

For the collaborating with community activities, there were moderately strong differences between the responses of the elementary and secondary school teacher groups except for the lack of any correlation between school level and working with local businesses, community organizations, etc. to enhance student learning. High school teachers perceived modestly greater frequency for this activity than their elementary school colleagues did. However, congruent with the sample-wide results reported in Section III, elementary school teachers saw substantially greater utilization of community resources (libraries, museums, parks, etc.) than the high school teachers in the sample.

**Elementary School and Secondary School Parents Comparisons**

Variation between the responses of parents of elementary school students and the parents of high school

students was very strong and was greater than the differences between elementary and secondary level teachers' responses. The differences within this set of paired study groups were greater than those observed for any of the other three sets.

There was substantial divergence in the perceptions of elementary and high school parents on the Type 1 parenting sub-scale. The differences were much greater than those observed in the paired teacher comparison groups for this activity cluster. There were no statistically significant differences among the teachers on any of the seven individual items in this activity cluster however; the perceptions of elementary school and secondary school parents were significantly different on four of these items. A much higher proportion of elementary parents indicated there was the frequent or extensive production of clear information linked to student success at the schools their children attended than the secondary school parents did. As in the teacher-teacher comparison, there was strong agreement between the two parent groups on the low level of sponsored home visits and this affected the composite score. A majority of parents in both of the parent groups indicated that home visits were not occurring at their respective schools.

Differences between parent groups on the communicating activity type sub-scale were strong and substantially larger than those found in the teacher group comparisons. Elementary school parents perceived greater frequency of practice than secondary school parents did for 7 of the 14 items that comprised the communicating sub-scale. The sole exception was in schools conducting orientation sessions for new parents; responses indicated that this activity was prevalent at both the elementary and secondary levels. Otherwise, a comparison of parent group responses suggested that there was much less frequent communication between high schools and parents than there was at the elementary school level.

The findings for volunteering activities in the elementary parent-secondary parent set mirrored those observed in the comparisons between elementary school and secondary school teachers. While there was no statistical difference on the reducing barriers to volunteer items among elementary and high school teachers, secondary school parents perceived a much lower level of effort on this partnership activity than the elementary parents did. The elementary parents perceived greater frequency of encouraging parents to volunteer and school recognition of

parent volunteer efforts than the parents of high school students did.

For four of the five Type 4 learning at home activities, the parents of children attending elementary schools perceived substantially greater activity levels than the parents of children enrolled at high schools did. Significantly, the school level gap for interactive homework was much greater in the comparisons of parent groups on this item than it was for the teacher group comparisons. As with the teacher-to-teacher comparisons, elementary school parents indicated a substantially higher frequency of activities, but the differences were uniformly larger than those found between the paired teacher groups.

The aggregated difference in responses between elementary and secondary school parents to the ten items in the decision activity type sub-scale was strong and much greater than the difference between elementary and secondary teachers' responses. Four items displayed significantly greater activity at the elementary level than at the secondary level within the parent group comparisons. In this context, parent perceptions of their schools' PTA/PTO activities showed substantially greater divergence by school level than teacher perceptions did. The sub-scale difference for the parent groups would have been larger

except that there two items with high rates of non-occurrence, formal networks linking parents with parent representatives and requesting more actively engaged parents to contact less involved parents.

The collaborating with community items showed moderately strong differences between the parents of elementary school students and the parents of high school students. The differences were somewhat greater on this section of the survey instrument than the differences between the paired teacher groups because three of eight items were statistically significant according to the criteria for this study. In contrast to the teacher group comparisons, secondary parents were no more likely than elementary parents to indicate that their child's school works with local businesses, organizations, etc. to enhance student skills and learning. On the other hand, like the paired teacher groups, the elementary school parents indicated more frequent/extensive use of community resources (local libraries, museums and the like) than the parents of high school students indicated.

**Elementary School Teachers and Elementary School Parents Comparisons**

The most noteworthy finding in all of the paired group comparisons in this study was the complete absence of variability in the perceptions of school partnership activities held by elementary school teachers and elementary school parents. No statistically significant differences were found between these two groups on any of the 52 activity items contained in the study's survey instrument. The prior discussion of school level differences has already highlighted the variation between the elementary and secondary levels; only a few points justify emphasis at this time.

In the parenting activity type, other than the high degree of comparability between elementary school teachers and parents across all seven items there are two points of agreement that need to be noted. First, a large proportion of subjects within both groups (35 percent) indicated that sponsored home visits were not taking place at their schools. Second, only a third of the elementary school teachers and parents indicated that their schools frequently or extensively held workshops and informational seminars for parents.

As already mentioned in the school level comparisons, school partnership communication activities were substantially greater at the elementary school level than they were at the high school level. A majority of participants in the elementary teacher and the elementary parent groups indicated that 11 of 14 activities occurred at their schools on a frequent or extensive basis. However, there were three exceptions to this positive pattern that were significant. Elementary school teachers and parents generally agreed that their schools had not developed communications for parents who are not proficient in English and/or do not read well, with 20 percent of the group indicating that this activity was not occurring at their respective schools. Similarly, both elementary teachers and elementary parents gave low frequency ratings to their schools on conducting parent surveys to share information and concerns about student needs; 16 percent checked the "not occurring" response category. Finally, although only 5.4 percent of the total elementary school study participants indicated that their schools did not train teachers, staff and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and on ways to build school-community ties, only a minority (42.39 percent)

checked the frequent or the extensive response category for this item.

The volunteering sub-scale did exhibit a significant, but small, degree of difference between the responses of elementary school teachers and elementary school parents. However, there were no differences on any of the eight individual items in this section of the survey instrument. The two groups did have opposite patterns in their perception of school activities to train parent volunteers to use their time productively: a slight majority of parents indicated that such training was frequent or extensive while a slight majority of teachers indicated that it was rare or occasional. The most troubling aspect of the volunteering results was that less than half of the participants in the elementary teacher-parent groups reported that their schools frequently or extensively sought to reduce barriers to parent volunteering by offering child care, transportation and/or more flexible scheduling of school events.

There were no differences between the elementary school teachers and the elementary school parents on any of the five items in the learning at home portion of the survey and there was a very low incidence of "not occurring" responses for these five activities. Primary

teachers and parents were in general agreement that their schools were doing something to encourage learning at home. For interactive homework, only 1 percent of the elementary teacher-parent group indicated that interactive homework was not being assigned at all, 56.5 percent indicated frequent or extensive usage, while 42.4 percent indicate that such assignments were rarely or occasionally employed by the teachers at their schools.

The perceptions of decision-making partnership activities held by elementary school teachers and elementary school parents were in very close agreement. A majority in both groups perceived that their schools had active PTA or PTOs. By the same token, a majority in both groups agreed that parents were not participating in curriculum revision decisions and a majority in both groups indicated that their schools did little to establish networks between parents and parent representatives or to promote contacts between parents outside of formal organizational boundaries.

There were no differences between the two study groups on the collaborating with community activities taken individually or collectively. There were some high "not occurring" items, such as schools offering "one-stop shopping" for community services.

**Secondary School Teachers and Secondary School Parents Comparisons**

In contrast to the modest absence of variation between elementary school teacher and parent groups, there were some significant differences between the perceptions of secondary school teachers and the perceptions of secondary school parents on the frequency of school partnership activities.

The degree of difference between secondary school teachers and the parents of high school students on the parenting activity type sub-scale was statistically significant but small. Among the seven items in the parenting activity type, only the sponsoring of home visits showed a meaningful difference with both groups indicating a high frequency of rare or non occurrence. But the difference between the two groups on this partnership practice was effectively overwhelmed by the high proportion of subjects in both groups who checked the "not occurring" response category for sponsored home visits.

There was substantial congruence between high school teachers and parents on the perceived frequency of school partnership communication activities. However, the correspondence between the two groups was not as great or as uniform as that observed in the comparison between

elementary school teachers and parents. Responses to two items need attention. High school teachers perceived higher frequencies of (1) "establishes clear two-way channels for home school communications" and (2) "develops school plan and program of family community involvement with input from educators, parents and others" than was indicated by the parents of high school students. These findings suggest that the parents in this paired group saw less effort being exerted by schools to create and sustain a meaningful two-way flow of communication than the teachers did.

Although high school teachers were slightly more likely to indicate frequent/extensive recognition of parent volunteers than the secondary school parents were, the difference on this volunteering item did not reach statistical significance. In contrast to the volunteering section of the survey, one of the five learning at home activities reached statistical significance in this cluster. Secondary school teachers and parents indicated a lower frequency of interactive homework assignments. The difference between the two groups was modest when seen in relation to the low proportion (17.5 percent) of secondary level subjects who indicated frequent or extensive use of interactive homework and in comparison to the large share of participants who indicated that interactive homework was

being assigned at their schools rarely or occasionally. Teachers perceived a greater frequency of assistance to families in the formation of student academic goals and course selection than parents of high school students did.

The composite difference between the paired groups on the decision-making items was smaller than the difference between groups for learning at home activities. High school teachers were more likely to check frequent or extensive response categories for parental representation on district-level advisory committees and school personnel dealing with conflict in an open and respectful manner than parents were. But the differences between the two groups on these two items were not statistically significant according to the study's criteria.

Lastly, the aggregated responses to the eight items on the collaborating with the community sub-scale displayed the greatest difference between high school teachers and parents perceptions of any of the six activity categories within the school partnership model. Teachers perceived greater frequency of schools offering after-school programs in conjunction with community organizations and greater frequency of schools working with businesses and community groups to enhance student learning than parents did. The differences observed here may be a reflection of superior

teacher knowledge concerning collaboration with the community.

**Summary Remarks on the Paired Group Analyses**

The bulk of the variation between groups discerned in this study was accounted for by the school level variable as opposed to differences in the perceptions held respectively by teachers and parents. Although there were some significant differences between high school teachers and high school parents, these were modest when compared with the gaps between elementary school and secondary school study participants. In general, the strongest degrees of inter-group differences were found for Type 2 (communicating), Type 3 (volunteering) and Type 4 (learning at home) activities.

As mentioned above, Schulte's (2004) study is the only other quantitative investigation of variation between the perceptions of school partnership activities that compared teachers and parents that distinguished between elementary and secondary school levels. The findings of this study, however, only partially resemble those reported by Schulte. Of greatest importance, the degree of difference between teachers and parents in both elementary and secondary school pairs was much lower than Schulte discerned in his South Dakota sample.

The lack of substantial difference between found between teachers and parents in the New Hampshire participants in this study, is not congruent with the divergence (and conflict) between the views of public school educators and parents reported within the empirical literature (Barnard, 2004; Epstein, 2001; Lawson, 2003). For example, in a study restricted to the lower elementary school grades, Barnard (2004) found that parents reported significantly higher learning at home activities than the teachers of their children did. A corresponding difference was not discerned in this study. However, it is important to mention that all five of the items in the learning at home activity scale of the study's data-gathering instrument used in this study inquired about the extent of formal practices/policies initiated by schools and did not tap into activities initiated or sustained by parents apart from specific school programs/practices.

## Community/District Demographic Factors

### Socioeconomic Status

In addition to teacher, parent, and school level variables, this study explored the influence of three community/school district demographic factors on subjects' perceptions of the frequency of school partnership activities: (1) community socioeconomic status, (2) school

district size, and (3) community type (urban, suburban, and rural). Since the sampling universe was restricted to New Hampshire public schools, the demographic profile of the participants reflected statewide characteristics. In terms of its population and its geographic size, New Hampshire is a relatively small state. Even though there are pockets of poverty within the state, the majority of the population resides in middle income households, and while there are a few urban centers located within New Hampshire, most of the state's residents live in rural or suburban communities. A reflection of the state's strong "home rule" tradition accounts for New Hampshire's large number of public school districts relative to its state-wide enrollment and accordingly it has an above average proportion of small school districts.

The first variable, community socioeconomic status found the majority of the study's participants, 106 (68.4 percent), lived within school districts in which the average household income was characterized as middle class. Thirty two subjects (20.65) resided in low income communities, and 17 (10.9) lived in high income localities. The socioeconomic status of communities showed strong but surprisingly inconsistent relationships with subjects'

perceptions of school partnership activity frequency levels.

Community SES was powerfully correlated with parenting activities and the differences shown on this scale were greater than those found in any of the study's elementary - secondary level comparisons. The composite score and five of the seven individual parenting items had significant differences and within this, the small sample of subjects from high income communities had a very strong impact. As was observed in all six categories of the school partnership model, the 17 participants from comparatively wealthy communities gave higher frequency ratings than the middle income and low income subjects did. The subjects residing in middle class communities indicated a greater frequency of occurrence for parenting activity item 3 (produces information for families that is clearly usable and linked to children's success in school). This pattern strongly suggests that resource constraints at the school district and student household levels had an impact on the parenting activities of school-community partnerships. Overall, residents of high income communities indicated a higher frequency rating of parenting activities than subjects from middle income communities did and the middle income community participants indicated a greater frequency

of activities than study participants from low income communities.

On the other hand, socioeconomic status displayed only modest correlations with subjects' perceptions of communications activities. The composite difference among high, medium, and low income community groups was much smaller than the differences found by school grade level. Only one of the 14 items in this activity cluster, the production of a school newsletter, generated a significant degree of difference. As a whole, residents of high income communities indicated slightly greater frequency of partnership communication activities than subjects from middle income communities did and the middle income communities indicated a slightly greater frequency of communications activities when compared with study participants from low income communities.

Community SES was strongly associated with volunteering although it was not as strong as school level relationships. Seven of the eight items in the volunteering sub-scale showed significant correlations with community socioeconomic status. Overall, consistent with intuitive expectations, subjects from high and middle income localities generally indicated greater frequencies than of volunteering activities than subjects residing in low

income communities. There was a noteworthy exception to this pattern. Residents from middle class communities perceived a greater frequency of schools conducting annual surveys to identify the interests, talents, and availability of prospective parent volunteers than the high income group did. The disparities between middle income and lower income schools were substantial and noteworthy. The middle income schools received higher frequency ratings on encouraging family and community members to volunteer for school service, on recognizing the contributions of volunteers and on encouraging families to be involved in a variety of groups than lower income schools reported. This suggests that school resource differences and/or greater difficulties in mobilizing volunteers within low income communities contributed to the limited opportunities presented to low income families. Volunteering activities were skewed away from precisely the socioeconomic class of families that requires stronger outreach.

The relationship between community SES and learning at home activities was surprisingly modest. None of the five items within in this section of the survey exhibited statistically significant associations with the study's community socioeconomic status variable. The relatively small group of subjects from high income communities in the

sample did report slightly greater levels of learning at home activity frequency, but the differences among the three groups were weak.

By contrast, community SES showed strong connections with Type 5 decision-making activities. The sub-scale degree of variation was greater than that shown for the school level association with decision making; seven of the ten items displayed statistically significant differences. Subjects living in high and middle income communities consistently reported greater levels of parental involvement in school decision-making than study participants from low SES communities did.

Lastly, the relationship between community SES and school collaboration with the community was moderate. The association was stronger than that obtained from comparisons by school grade level, slightly greater than that found for collaboration and school target community (urban, suburban, or rural) but lower than the relationships found between school district size and collaboration with the community activities. As might be anticipated, subjects from high and middle income communities indicated substantially more frequent collaboration and gave proportionally fewer "not occurring"

ratings to their schools on collaboration items than participants living in low income communities did.

The strength of the household and community SES factors upon school partnership activities observed in this study was entirely congruent with findings reported in the empirical literature on parental involvement (Coleman & Churchill, 1997; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Henry 1996; Sheldon, 2003) and in NNPS evaluation studies (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). This study used a measure of school community, as opposed to student household, socioeconomic status, but the findings supported those of other studies that reported associations between parental involvement and school partnership activities using individual student background data. Oddly, while community SES was directly associated with perceived school partnership activity levels, its connection to learning at home activities was unexpectedly weak. Overall, the study's findings for community SES reaffirm that resources at both the household and the school district levels are strongly connected to the ability of public schools to implement partnership programs. They may also reflect the greater degree of effort required to engage and to mobilize low income parents and community residents as active school partners. The differences in community resources clearly count.

**School District Size**

The study's findings for the relationship between school district size and school partnership activity levels as perceived by teachers and parents were heavily affected by the criteria used to discriminate among small, medium, and large size districts. Recognizing that New Hampshire has an inordinately large proportion of districts with small student enrollments, the researcher defined "small" districts as those with less than 250 students; "medium" as districts having between 250 to 750 enrolled students, and "large" districts as those with more than 750 students. Delineated in this way, the final sample was dominated by large districts: 101 of the 155 study participants (65.1 percent of the sample) worked at or sent children to schools in districts with more than 750 students. Only 44 subjects (28.3 percent) were classified as "medium" in size and only 7 (6.4 percent) were categorized as working or sending a child to a "small" district. This unbalanced distribution skewed the study's results for school district size. In the discussion below, when it is relevant, findings are presented in dichotomous terms, with "small" and "medium" districts aggregated together as "smaller" in contrast to districts with more than 750 enrolled students designated as "larger."

Except for collaborating with the community, school district size did not show powerful associations with the perceived frequency of school partnership activities. Even when significant variation was observed the findings displayed a mixed picture. For Type 1 parenting activities respondents held that these partnership activities occurred rarely/occasionally even when it came to their respective districts providing information, training, and assistance to families who want it or need it. But for Type 2 communicating activities, participants across all small, medium, and large size districts indicated this activity occurred frequently/extensively. On one item concerning an annual survey, subjects from middle size school districts indicated a greater frequency of occurrence than their counterparts from large and small districts.

Weak statistically significant differences by school district size were found on the volunteering sub-scale. Participants from larger districts perceived more frequent school recognition of volunteers for their services, but medium sized districts received higher frequency marks for conducting annual surveys to identify the interests, the talents, and the availability of potential parent volunteers. There were no meaningful differences among

participants from districts of varying size on the Type 4 (learning at home) and Type 5 (decision-making) sub-scales.

The strongest connections between school district size and school partnership activity frequencies were observed on subjects' responses to Type 6 collaborating with the community activities. Participants from larger school districts indicated significantly greater frequencies of schools solving turf problems in an effective manner among their partnership organizations. However, medium sized districts received higher frequency marks than their large sized districts on several other items, including offering after school programs to students with the help of community organizations. Somewhat surprisingly, districts with 250 to 750 enrolled students were perceived to engage in working alliances with local businesses and community organizations to enhance student learning more frequently than large districts.

The findings for school district size were not strong and therefore the findings cannot be clearly interpreted. The differences found on collaborating with the community suggest that districts with fewer than 750 pupils (but more than 250 enrolled students) can forge partnerships with community organizations. There is also some indication that medium sized districts are more likely to solicit

information from parents than their large and small counterparts are. Even these conclusions are tentative.

**Community Type**

The establishment of urban, suburban, and rural categories for schools prior to data collection yielded a skewed distribution of responses across categories. Given the nature of New Hampshire school districts, subjects from rural communities were heavily represented, comprising 52.2 percent of the sample with participants from suburban communities accounting for 43.2 percent of the study's subjects. Urban residents were acutely under-represented. Only seven of the study participants were classified as living or residing in urban communities. Moreover, a comparison of community SES indicated that the urban portion of the study sample lived in high income communities, rather than high poverty inner-city neighborhoods. The net result was that the responses from the urban subjects had a powerful influence upon the study's findings for the relationship between community type and perceived school partnership activity levels. This influence was especially pronounced on activity items in the Type 1 (parenting) and Type 2 (communicating) sub-scales.

More significantly, however, the participants from suburban schools generally indicated higher frequencies of school partnership activities than subjects from rural communities did on four of the partnership model's six dimensions (volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community). For example, suburban schools were perceived as more frequently or extensively encouraging parental volunteers than schools in rural communities were. In comparing just rural and suburban school participants, the residents of suburban communities reported modestly higher frequencies for the five items in the learning at home composite sub-scale than the rural subjects did. The findings for Type 5 decision-making were collectively significant and exhibited stronger frequency ratings for suburban schools in comparison to their rural counterparts. Participants from suburban school districts indicated that their schools more frequently or extensively engaged parents in the planning, review and improvement of school programs. On the other hand, subjects working or living in rural communities indicated a higher frequency of school parents from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school serving as school leaders. Lastly, the sub-scale for collaborating with the community showed substantial difference across the

three groups and strongly indicated that the under-represented urban schools had strong community collaboration. Subjects from suburban schools indicated greater frequency of collaboration activities than rural participants did.

The findings for community type imply that rural schools are less likely to engage in some school partnership activities on a frequent or extensive basis than suburban schools are. It is quite possible that this pattern is at least partially the result of the influence of community SES. Rural schools were more likely to be located in low income communities than suburban schools. In addition to this, the physical distance between rural schools and student homes may have reduced the frequency of partnership activity, particularly within the volunteering and learning at home dimensions of Epstein's and the NNPS model.

## Study Significance, Limitations and Recommendations

This study yielded significant findings concerning a comprehensive model of school practices that has been shown to have important consequences for student academic and behavioral outcomes, school improvement, and community functioning. It represents a significant contribution to the empirical literature on public school educational

policies in general and school-community partnerships in particular. Aside from Schulte's (2004) South Dakota survey, this study is the only investigation to have compared the perceptions of partnership activity frequencies held by teachers and parents that discriminates between elementary and secondary schools. Moreover, the findings of this study departed from those reported by Schulte in several important ways.

The most important finding from this investigation runs contrary to the findings often reported in the empirical literature on school partnerships. Frequently the discrepancies between perceptions of parents and teachers are cited as barriers to school partnership implementation, but in this study differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers were not evident. Indeed, the perceptions of elementary school teachers and elementary school parents on the frequency and occurrence of partnership activities were virtually identical. On the other hand, perceived differences between elementary and secondary schools were large and they were especially strong when analyzed using parent responses. In this regard, the study's findings affirmed those reported in NNPS evaluation surveys and in the research literature. Apparently, public high schools in New Hampshire have not implemented the school partnership

model to the same extent as public elementary schools in the state have.

The validity and reliability of the study's findings were limited by multiple factors. The sample size (N = 155) was small and parents of high schools students were notably under-represented. The effects of the sample's size were especially apparent on the findings for the study's community/school district demographic variables and sample size also limited the validity of the study's hypotheses-testing conclusions. While there was no direct evidence of study participant bias, the data was gathered from voluntary participants and reflected the perceptions of voluntary subjects. It is likely that the responses of some subjects were influenced by unrecognized biases ranging from negative stereotypes about public schools, school personnel, and/or the parents of public school students to the general forces of social desirability. Schulte (2004) and other researchers used the study's sole data-gathering instrument and in Epstein's (2008) estimation its sub-scales have a high degree of internal reliability. In the researcher's opinion, the validity of this instrument as a means for discriminating between the responses of elementary and secondary school study participants is questionable.

The generalizability of the study's findings is constrained by the restriction of the study sample to public school districts in the state of New Hampshire with a specific grade configuration. It is also noteworthy that urban schools were deeply under-represented within the study sample, while rural schools were over-represented.

Based in part on these limitations, tentative recommendations for future quantitative research into school-community partnerships are offered by the researcher. First, the high degree of variability by school grade level observed in this study implies that a single survey instrument may not be able to capture the extent of school-community partnership implementation in both elementary and secondary schools. For this reason, it is advisable that separate instruments be constructed and used in studies involving elementary schools, high schools, or both. This would limit the comparability of results across study groups in investigations encompassing elementary and secondary school subjects. Nevertheless, several of the items contained in the study instrument such as an inquiry about parents reading aloud to students, for example, appear to be of low relevance for subjects who work at or send children to high schools. Second, some of the items appearing in the study's data-gathering instrument elicited

a high proportion of "not occurring" responses. From this study's findings, it appears that very few schools maintain a parent volunteer room on their premises and that only a handful of schools ask active parents to contact less engaged parents. These "non-core" items could be deleted from the survey. Third, the use of a response scale based on frequency of usage is problematical for activities that occur on an irregular basis such as annual parent-teacher conferences. The researcher would recommend the substitution of a response category scale (along with revision of some survey items) asking participants to indicate their level of agreement with declarative statements about school partnership practice implementation. Lastly, larger scale studies of teacher and parent views on school partnership practices implementation are clearly warranted.

The study's findings suggest that while the implementation of exemplary partnership activities at the elementary school level is inconsistent and deficient in some respects, high schools show a much poorer partnership model performance even when activities that are not relevant to secondary schools are discounted. Based on the findings in this study several recommendations regarding practice are recommended. First, school district officials

and high school building administrators should focus attention on strengthening partnerships at the secondary level. Second, consistent with Arygris's views on organizational change, a much stronger effort should be made to solicit information from parents. At both the elementary and secondary levels, communication flows are unidirectional. At the same time, parents and community members should be regularly informed about the school partnership program performance. Two way communication flows are essential for double loop learning processes among both parents/community members and teachers/school administrators. The need for bi-directional communication suggests that possible solutions include that school districts move beyond accepted routines and develop new understandings and insight into partnerships through the use of electronic media including student information systems, websites, virtual media, and blogs that favor meaningful parent involvement and result in positive outcomes for students. Third, neither the elementary nor the secondary schools represented in this study were viewed as effectively addressing life context barriers to parental involvement, including child care responsibility, work schedules, transportation needs, etc. The researcher would strongly recommend the use of volunteers to assist parents

in actively participating in their children's education by reducing these barriers. Lastly and closely related to this point, this study's findings support Schulte's assertions about school partnership activities being confined to school grounds. Sponsored home visits and parent workshops within the community are not common even among schools that have adopted Epstein's model or the NNPS partnership model. Such activities require significant expenditures of time and effort. Nevertheless, moving partnership activities beyond school property would amplify the beneficial effects of school-community programs. Not only would more parents and community members become engaged in partnerships, the regnant theory in use governing the behaviors of school personnel, parents, and community members would be challenged by the espoused and desirable theory of schools, families, and community members working together as equal partners into the 21st century and beyond.

# REFERENCES

Argyris, C. (2003). A life full of learning. *Organization Studies, 24*(7), 1178-1191.

Argyris, C., & Schon, D. A. (1996). *Organizational learning II: Theory, methods and practice.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Balli, S. J., Demo, D. H., & Wedman, J. F. (1998). Family involvement with children's homework: An intervention in the middle grades. *Family Relations*: *47*(2), 149-157.

Barnard, W. M. (2004). Parent involvement in elementary school and educational attainment. *Child and Youth Services Review*: *26*(1), 39-62.

Bird, K. (2006). Student Information Systems: how do you spell parental involvement? Retrieved December 2009 from http://thejournal.com/articles/2006/02/01/student-information-systems--how-do-you-spell-parental-involvement-sis.aspx?sc_lang=en

Bramante, F. J., Cobb, P., Comer, J., Eisner, E., Fiske, E. B., Goodlad, J., & Williams, D. (2007). *A Report on the Commission of the Whole Child.* Retrieved November 2009 from http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/Whole%20Child/WCC%20Learning% 20Compact.pdf

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Burke, M. A. (2001). Recruiting and using volunteers in meaningful ways in secondary schools. *NASSP Bulletin*: *85*(627), 48-52.

Campbell & Jackson, 1979; Kazdin, 1982; Lamal, 1991; Rosenthal, 1990; Sidman, 1960; Smith, 1970; Sommer & Sommer, 1983. On the Importance of Replication. In James Neuliep (Ed), *Replication Research in the Social Science (pp. 31-35), (1991)*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Carlton, M. P., & Winsler, A. (1999). School readiness: The need for a paradigm shift. *School Psychology Review*: *28*(3), 338-352.

Catsambis, S. (2001). Expanding knowledge of parental involvement in children's secondary education: Connections with high school seniors' academic success. *Social Psychology of Education, 5*(2), 149-177.

Chrispeels, J., Gonzalez, M., & Arellano, B. (2004). *Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Parent Institute for Quality Education in the Los Angeles Unified School District*: September, 2003 to May, 2004. San Diego, CA: Parent Institute for Quality Education.

Christenson, S. L. (2004). The family-school partnership: An opportunity to promote the learning competence of all students. *School Psychology Review, 33*(1), 83-104.

Christenson, S. L., & Sheridan, S. M. (2001). *Schools and families: Creating essential connections for learning.* New York Guilford Press.

Coleman, J. S. (1987). Families and schools. *Educational Researcher, 16*(6), 32-38.

Coleman, J. S., Campbell, E. Q., Hobson, C. J., McPartland, J., Mood, A. M., Weinfield, F. D., & York, R. L. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Coleman, M., & Churchill, S. (1997). Challenges to family involvement. *Childhood Education*: *73*(2), 144-148.

Constantini, L. & Montagne, M. (2008). *Parental Engagement in the 21st Century - Leveraging web 2.0 tools to engage parents in non-traditional ways*. Retrieved December 2009 from http://dotsub.com/view/31d4877f-1431-4ab3-afdc-1fccc19d1ae4

Creswell, J. (2003) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (2nd Ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Davis, D. (2000). *Supporting parent, family and community involvement in your school. Retrieved May 2008 from http://www.nwrel.org/csrdp/family pdf*

Dearing E., Kreider, H., Simpkins, S., & Weiss, H. V. (2006). Family involvement in school and low-income children's literacy: Longitudinal associations between and within families. *Journal of Educational Psychology*: *98*(4), 653-664.

Desforges, C. (2003). *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review.* London: Department of Education and Skills.

Dorfman, D., & Fisher, A. (2002). *Building relationships for student success: School-family-community partnerships and student achievement in the Northwest.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Eccles, J. S., & Harold, R. D. (1996). Family involvement in children's and adolescents' schooling. In A. Booth & J. F. Dunn (Eds.). *Family-school links: How do they affect educational outcomes?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 3-34. (HAVE)

Ellis, D., & Hughes, K. (2002). *Partnerships by design: Cultivating effective and meaningful school-family-community partnerships.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Epstein, J. L. (1987). Toward a theory of family-school connections: Teacher practices and parent involvement. In K. Hurrelman, F. Kaufmann, & F. Losel (Ed.), *Social intervention: Potential and constraints* (pp. 121-136). New York: DeGruyter.

Epstein, J. L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*, 701-712.

Epstein, J. L. (2001. *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Epstein, J. L. (2007). Connections: Improving family and community involvement in secondary schools. *Principal Leadership*: *8*(2), 16-22.

Epstein, J. L., & Becker, H. (1982). Teachers reported practices of parent involvement: Problems and possibilities. *Elementary School Journal,* 83, 103-113.

Epstein, J. L. & Jansorn, N. R. (2004). Developing successful partnership programs. *Principal*: *83*(3), 10-15.

Epstein, J. L., & Salinas, K. C. (1993) *School and family partnerships: Surveys and Summaries.* Johns Hopkins University Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships, Baltimore, MD.

Epstein, J. L., Salinas, K. C., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2001). *Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) manuals and prototype activities for the elementary and middle grades.* Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University

Epstein, J. L. & Sanders, M. G. (2000). Connecting home, school, and community: New directions for social research. In M. Hallinan (Ed.), *Handbook of sociology of education*. New York: Plenum Books, 285-306.

Epstein, J., & Sanders, M. (2006). Prospects for change: preparing educators for school, family and community partnerships. *Peabody Journal of Education*: *81*(2), 81-120.

Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2002). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2002). Family involvement practices: Implications for urban teacher preparation. *Urban Education, 39* (3), 290-315.

Epstein, J. L. & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement. *Journal of Educational Research*: *95*(5), 308-318.

Epstein, J. L. & Sheldon, S. B. (2006). Moving forward: Ideas for research on school, family and community partnerships. In C. F. Conrad and R. C. Serlin (Eds.), *The Sage handbook for research in education: Engaging ideas and enriching inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage Publications, 117-137.

Fan, X. & Chen, M. (2001). Parent involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*: *13*(1), 1-22.

Fishel, M. & Ramirez, L. (2005). Evidence-based parent involvement interventions with school-aged children. *School Psychology Quarterly*: *20*(4), 371-402.

Fowler, F. (2002). *Survey Research Methods: 3rd Edition.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Frankel, J. R. & Wallen, N. E. (2003) *How to design and evaluate research in education (5th Ed.)* San Francisco, CA: Mc Graw Hill.

Gall, M, Gall, J. & Borg, W. (2007) Educational Research: An Introduction (8th Ed.) Boston, MA: Pearson.

Garcia, D. C. (2004). Exploring connections between the construct of teacher efficacy and

Gay, J. R. & Airasian, P. (2003). *Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Applications (7th Ed.)*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Henderson, A. T. & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools.

Henderson, A. T. & Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education.

Henry, M. (1996). *Parent-school collaboration*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Ho, E. S., & Willms, J. D. (1996). Effects of parental involvement on eighth-grade achievement. *Sociology of Education, 69*, 126-141.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkins, A. S. & Closson, K. (2005). Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications. *Elementary School Journal*: *106*(2), 105-130.

Izzo, C. V., Weissberg, R. P., Kasprow, W. J. & Fendrich, M. (1999). A longitudinal assessment of teacher perceptions of parent involvement in children's education and school performance. *American Journal of Community Psychology 27*(6), 817-839.

Jeynes W. H. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relations of parental involvement to urban elementary school academic achievement. *Urban Education*: *40*(3), 237-269.

Jeynes, W. H. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student achievement. *Urban Education*: *42*(1), 82-110.

Johnson, B. & Christensen, L. (2004). *Educational Research: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches.* Boston, MA.: Pearson.

Lammers, C. J. (1967). Power and participation in decision-making in formal organizations. *American Journal of Sociology*, *73*(2), 201-216.

Lawson, M. A. (2003). School-family relations in context: Parent and teacher perceptions of parental involvement. *Urban Education*: *38*(1), 77-133.

Lustig, M. W. & Anderson (1987, 1988). On the Importance of Replication. In James Neuliep,(1991). Replication Research in the Social Sciences (p. 298). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Mattingly, D. J., Prislin, R., McKenzie, T. I., Rodriguez, J. L. & Kayzar, B. (2002). Evaluating evaluations: The case of parent involvement programs. *Review of Educational Research*: *72*(4), 549.576.

Mitchell, C. (2008). *Parent involvement in public education: A literature review.* Philadelphia: Research for Action.

National Education Goals Panel,(n.d.). Retrieved May 2008 from http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/

National Parent Teacher Association. (2006). *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs.* Adopted (1997). Retrieved May 2008 from http://www.pta.org/picert/

New Hampshire Department of Education. (2008) *New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules.* Retrieved November 2008 from http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/laws/documents/306 Adopted.pdf

Office of the Director of Legislative Services and Thompson Reuters/West, *New Hampshire Education Laws Annotated 2008-2009 Edition.* Concord, NH: Author.

Overstreet, S., Devine, J., Bevans, K. & Efreom, Y. (2005). Predicting parental involvement in children's schooling within an economically disadvantaged African American sample. *Psychology in the Schools*: *42*(1), 101-111.

Pigott, T. D. & Israel, M. S. (2005). Head Start children's transition to kindergarten. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*: *3*(1), 77-104.

Quezada, Reyes. L. (2003). Going for the gold! Reports on effective home-school-community partnership programs. *School Community Journal*: *13*(2), 137-155.

Ramirez, A. Y. (2000). High school teachers' view of parent involvement. *American Secondary Education*: *28*(4), 27-32.

Redding, S., Langdon, J., Meyer, J. & Sheley, P. (2004). *The effects of comprehensive parent engagement on student learning outcomes.* Paper presented at the annual connection of the American Education Research Association, San Diego, April 14, 2004.

Salinas, Epstein, Sanders, Davis & Aldersebaes. (2000). *Measure of School, Family and Community Partnerships.* In D. Davis, Supporting Parent, Family, and Community Involvement in Your School. Retrieved May 2008 from http://www.nwrel.org/csrdp/family/pdf.

Salinas, K. C. & Jansorn, N. (2001). *Promising partnership practices---2001.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships.

Sanders, M. G. (2001). Schools, families, communities partnering for middle levels students' success. *NASSP Bulletin*: *85*(627), 53-61.

Sanders, M. G. (2003). Community involvement in schools: From concepts to practice. *Education and Urban Society*: *35*(2), 161-180.

Sanders, M. G. (2006). *Building School-Community Partnerships: Collaborating for Student Success.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Sanders, M. G. & Epstein, J. L. (1999). The National Network of Partnership Schools: How research influences educational practice. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*: *5*(1), 61-76.

Sanders, M. G. & Simon, B. S. (2002). A comparison of program development at elementary, middle, and high schools in the National Network of Partnership Schools. *School Community Journal*: *12*(1), 7-27.

Schulte, S. J. (2004). *Perceptions of parents and teachers in building school partnership.* University of South Dakota. Ed.D., University of South Dakota, AAT 3138438

Sheldon, S. B. (2003). Linking school-family-community partnerships in urban elementary schools to student achievement on state tests. *Urban Review*: *35*(2), 149-165.

Sheldon, S. B. (2004). *Testing the effects of school, family, and community partnerships on student outcomes.* Baltimore: MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships.

Sheldon, S. B, & Epstein, J. L. (2002). Improving student behavior and school discipline with family and community involvement. *Education and Urban Society*: *35*(1), 4-26.

Sheldon, S. B, & Epstein, J. L. (2004). Getting students to school: Using family and community involvement to reduce chronic absenteeism. *School Community Journal*: *14*(2), 39-56.

Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2005) Involvement counts: Family and community partnerships and mathematics achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*: *98*(4), 196-206.

Sheldon, S. B. & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2004). Partnerships programs in U.S. schools: Their development and relationship to family involvement outcomes. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*: *15*(2), 125-148.

Simon, B. S. (2001). Family involvement in high school: Predictors and effects. *NASSP Bulletin*: *85*(627), 8-19.

Simon, B. S. (2004). High school outreach and family involvement. *Social Psychology of Education*: 7, 185-209.

U. S. Department of Education. (2002). *No Child Left Behind: Part A-improving basic programs operated by local education agencies. Subpart 1-Basic program requirement. Sec 1118*. Washington, D.C. Author. Retrieved September 2008. http:// www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02.

Vos, V. (1992). Where do parents belong in public education? *Mothering Magazine, 62(6),96.*

Wherry, J. H. (2003). Evaluating parent involvement. *Principal*: *82*(3), pp.6-7.

Yap, K. O. & Enoki, D. Y. (1995). In search of the elusive magic bullet: Parental involvement and student outcomes. *School Community Journal*: *5*(2), 97-106.

# APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

## PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN BUILDING SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

## TEACHER SURVEY

**This survey asks for your judgment in measuring how your school is meeting the challenges to involve all families in building parent partnerships. Carefully examine the scoring rubric below before rating your school on the six types of involvement. As you review each item, please circle one response for each item that best describes your school.**

**Scoring Rubric**

**1 = Not occurring** : Does not happen at our school
**2 = Rarely**: Clearly not emphasized in our school
**3 = Occasionally**: Receives minimal time or emphasis in our school
**4 = Frequently**: Occurs frequently and receives repeated emphasis in our school
**5 = Extensively**: Receives extensive time and emphasis in our school

## I. PARENTING:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| 2. Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| 3. Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| 4. Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |

APPENDIX A (continued)

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 5. Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## II. COMMUNICATING:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Establishes clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX A (continued)

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 7. Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## III. VOLUNTEERING:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/ talents with school and classroom needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX A (continued)

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 2. Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## IV. LEARNING AT HOME:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss school work at home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## V. DECISION MAKING:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 4. Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## VI. COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX A (continued)

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 3. Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Opens its building for use by the community after school hours. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# VI. DEMOGRAPHICS:

**Please check the appropriate responses:**

**1. K-12 school district enrollment:**

_____ Less than 250 students

_____ 250-750 students

_____ More than 750 students

**2. Primary teaching assignment:**

_____Elementary (K-8)

_____Secondary (9-12)

**3. School community is in:**

_____urban area

_____suburban area

_____rural area

**4. Socioeconomic level of the community:**

_____ high

_____middle

_____low

APPENDIX B

# PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN BUILDING SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

## PARENT SURVEY

**This survey asks for your judgment in measuring how your school is meeting the challenges to involve all families in building parent partnerships. Carefully examine the scoring rubric below before rating your school on the six types of involvement. As you review each item, please circle one response for each item that best describes your school.**

**Scoring Rubric**

1 = **Not occurring** : Does not happen at our school
2 = **Rarely**: Clearly not emphasized in our school
3 = **Occasionally**: Receives minimal time or emphasis in our school
4 = **Frequently**: Occurs frequently and receives repeated emphasis in our school
5 = **Extensively**: Receives extensive time and emphasis in our school

## I. PARENTING:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Provides information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 4. Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools to understand families. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Provides families with information/training on developing home conditions or environments that support learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Respects the different cultures represented in our student population. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## II. COMMUNICATING:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Develops communication for parents, who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Establishes clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs and reactions to school programs, and their satisfaction with their involvement in school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Appendix B (continued)

| | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Our School: | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 6. Conducts an orientation for new parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, and achievement levels and report cards. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of contributions of parents and ways to build ties between school and home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Provides written communication in the language of the parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# III. VOLUNTEERING:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers, in order to match their skills/ talents with school and classroom needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Provides a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Creates flexible volunteering and school events schedules, enabling parents who work to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Trains volunteers so they use their time productively. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend some throughout the year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation, childcare, flexible schedules, and addresses the needs of English-language learners. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classrooms, giving talks, monitoring halls ,leading activities, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# IV. LEARNING AT HOME:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss school work at home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Assists families in helping students set academic goals, select courses, and programs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# V. DECISION MAKING:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Has active PTA, PTO, or other parent organizations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX B (continued)

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 4. Involves parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way in the planning, review, and improvement of programs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Involves parents in revising the school/district curricula. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other groups in the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Includes students (along with parents) in decision-making groups. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Deals with conflict openly and respectfully. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas, and report back to them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## VI. COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY:

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 1. Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Involves families in locating and utilizing community resources. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX B (continued)

| Our School: | Rating | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not Occurring | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Extensively |
| 3. Works with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnership of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Opens its building for use by the community after school hours. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Utilizes community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# VI. DEMOGRAPHICS:

**Please check the appropriate responses:**

**1. K-12 school district enrollment:**

_____ Less than 250 students

_____ 250-750 students

_____ More than 750 students

**2. Primary teaching assignment**:

_____Elementary (K-8)

_____Secondary (9-12)

**3. School community is in:**

_____urban area

_____suburban area

_____rural area

**4. Socioeconomic level of the community:**

_____ high

_____middle

_____low

APPENDIX C

## CRITERIA FOR CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

**Elementary and Secondary Teachers Composite Scores**
Parenting $\chi$ = 6.469* modest difference
Communicating $\chi$ = 49.62* substantially greater difference
Volunteering $\chi$ = 60.517* strong difference
Learning at Home $\chi$ = 40.67* greater difference
Decision Making $\chi$ = 5.71* small degree of difference
Collaborating with Community $\chi$ = 24.36 moderate difference

**Elementary and Secondary School Parents Composite Scores**
Parenting $\chi$ = 36.013* substantial divergence
Communicating $\chi$ = 142*.481 very strong difference
Volunteering $\chi$ = 90.846* strong difference
Learning At Home $\chi$ = 78.435* substantially greater difference
Decision Making $\chi$ = 45.601* strong difference
Collaborating with Community $\chi$ = 31.879* moderately strong difference

**Elementary Teachers and Elementary Parents Composite Scores**
Parenting $\chi$ = no statistical difference
Communicating $\chi$ = no statistical difference
Volunteering $\chi$ = 13.410 small statistical difference
Learning At Home $\chi$ = no statistical difference
Decision Making $\chi$ = no statistical difference
Collaborating with Community $\chi$ = no statistical difference

**Secondary Teachers and Secondary Parents Composite Scores**
Parenting $\chi$ = 8.846* small difference
Communicating $\chi$ = no statistical difference
Volunteering $\chi$ = no statistical difference
Learning At Home $\chi$ = 21.79* modest difference
Decision Making $\chi$ = 11.14* moderate difference
Collaborating with Community $\chi$ = 24.37* modest difference

# APPENDIX D

## SURVEY PERMISSION LETTER

**To:** Brenda Zarnowski
**Cc:** Jean DeYoung
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 06, 2008 11:23 AM
**Subject:** RE: request permission to use a survey

Brenda-

This is to provide the permission you seek in your email reproduced below. This permission is limited to the material and use described; any other material or use will require separate permission. You can find the surveys in Appendix A of Davis, D. (2000). *Supporting parent, family, and community involvement in your school*, which can be retrieved from the Web at http://www.nwrel.org/csrdp/family.pdf. Please give appropriate credit.

I am afraid that we do not have information regarding similar surveys for principals.

Dave Wilson
Director, Development & Communications
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main St., Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
503-275-9517 (v)
503-275-0458 (f)
wilsond@nwrel.org
http://www.nwrel.org

**From:** Brenda Zarnowski [mailto:exodusz@comcast.net]
**Sent:** Monday, May 05, 2008 5:48 PM
**To:** Dave Wilson
**Subject:** request permission to use a survey

May 5, 2008

Dave Wilson
Director, Development and Communications
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main St., Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Director Wilson,

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH and am beginning to work on a dissertation on parent and teacher perceptions in building school partnerships. At the AASA Conference in San Antonio and in researching the databases I learned Stephen Schulte wrote a dissertation on this topic in 2004. I would like to do a follow-up based on Steve Schulte's research and instruments to learn about the perceptions of teachers and parents in building partnerships in public schools in New Hampshire. In his inquiry Stephen used 2 surveys from NWREL that surveyed parents' and teachers' perceptions in building school partnerships. I would like to use the same two surveys to collect data for my dissertation, either partially or entirely, and would like permission to do so.

So that I may continue work in this area I am writing to request your permission to use the teacher and parent surveys "Perceptions of Parents and Teachers in Building School Partnerships ( 2000, NWREL)." In addition I am interested in knowing if there is a survey for principals at the elementary and secondary school level. Finally, I am writing to ask if you would e-mail or send copies of the surveys, " Perceptions of Parents and Teachers in Building School Partnerships." If a principal survey is available I would appreciate copies of that survey also.

Thank you for your consideration of my request and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Brenda Zarnowski
Reading Specialist

# APPENDIX E

## REPLICATION PERMISSION LETTER

**From:** Brenda Zarnowski [mailto:exodusz@comcast.net]
**Sent:** Monday, May 05, 2008 7:10 PM
**To:** Schulte, Stephen
**Subject:** A request for permission to replicate your study

May 5, 2008

Dear Dr. Schulte,

My name is Brenda Zarnowski and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH. I am beginning to work on a dissertation and my topic is parent and teacher perceptions in building school partnerships. I attended your presentation at the American Association of School Administrators Annual Conference in San Antonio in 2005 and learned about your inquiry entitled
"Perceptions of Parents and Teachers in Building School Partnerships." In researching databases I found your dissertation and learned you collected data on parent and teacher perceptions in building school partnerships in South Dakota Schools in 2004.

I would like to do a follow-up study based on your research and instruments to learn about teacher and parent perceptions of building school partnerships in NH. I am requesting permission to replicate your study "Perceptions of Parents and Teachers in Building School Partnerships." At this time I plan to replicate your study. However, if NWERL has a version of the survey instrument for principals I may include that in my study. Another consideration is that I may limit my inquiry to grades K-8. Lastly, where appropriate I may make comparisons between South Dakota and New Hampshire schools.

Thank you for your consideration of my request and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Brenda Zarnowski
Reading Specialist

---

May 11, 2008

Dear Brenda Zarnowski:

I received your email requesting permission to replicate my study entitled, "Perceptions of Parents and Teachers in Building School Partnerships." I am blessed that a number of people have viewed my dissertation as well as your interest in replicating it. It makes all the effort and research put into the study worthwhile.

At this time, you have my permission to replicate my study and hopefully when you finish your dissertation you will send me a copy so that I may further review the research collected in this area.

Good luck with your study.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen J. Schulte

APPENDIX F

EPSTEIN PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

----- Original Message -----
**From:** Joyce Epstein
**To:** exodusz@comcast.net
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 06, 2008 12:24 PM
**Subject:** Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships

8-6-08

To: Brenda Zarnowski

From: Joyce Epstein

RE: Requested information

Sorry for my delay in responding to your email. E-mail has been on hold due to travel and other deadlines.

Please note the following: The *Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships* in our *Handbook for Action* was designed as a "team activity" and annual assessment for school's Action Team for Partnerships that are developing and improving their programs of family and community involvement using our framework of six types of involvement.

It was not designed for individual reports in large samples. Thus, we do not have reliability statistics on this measure.

However, some others have used the *Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships* with individuals in their dissertations. However, I do not have information on these studies. Based on our other surveys, I am sure that the six scales in the *Measure* would have high internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha). The items are on the *Measure* because of the consistent patterns found in other surveys and in field studies on the six types of involvement. If you use the *Measure* in a study, you would have to use a statistical program (such as SPSS- Scales) to check the reliability statistics for your study sample.

For other surveys that were designed for individual parents, teachers, and students in the elementary/middle and/or high school grades, see Surveys and Summaries on our website – **www,partnershipschools.org** – in the section

Publications and Products. These come with reports on the reliabilities of scales and subscales.

Hope this still is helpful to you.

Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D.
Director, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
and the National Network of Partnership Schools
Research Professor of Sociology
Johns Hopkins University
3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, MD 21218
tel: 410-516-8807 jepstein@csos.ihu.edu
fax: 410-516-8890 www.partnershipschools.org

----- Original Message -----
**From:** Brenda Zarnowski
**To:** nnps@csos.jhu.edu
**Sent:** Monday, May 26, 2008 10:45 PM
**Subject:** an inquiry

Dear Dr. Epstein and associates,

I am interested in using the School, Family and Community Partnerships instrument that appears in *School, Family and Community Partnerships Your Handbook for Action.* I am interested in knowing if a reliability and validity check was completed for the instrument and the process used for the check.

Would you kindly send the reliability and validity check and a description of the process.

Thank you,
Brenda Zarnowski
Reading Specialist

# APPENDIX G

# IRB APPROVAL LETTER

University *of* New Hampshire

Research Integrity Services, Office of Sponsored Research
Service Building, 51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585
Fax: 603-862-3564

30-Mar-2009

Zarnowski, Brenda
Education, Morrill Hall
10 Champernowne
Madbury, NH 03823

**IRB #:** 4548
**Study:** Parent and Teacher Perceptions of School Partnerships in New Hampshire
**Approval Date:** 27-Mar-2009

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study as Exempt as described in Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 46, Subsection 101(b). Approval is granted to conduct your study as described in your protocol.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the attached document, *Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects.* (This document is also available at http://www.unh.edu/osr/compliance/irb.html.) Please read this document carefully before commencing your work involving human subjects.

Upon completion of your study, please complete the enclosed Exempt Study Final Report form and return it to this office along with a report of your findings.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-2003 or Julie.simpson@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,

Julie F. Simpson
Manager

cc: File
Krysiak, Barbara

APPENDIX H

CONSENT LETTERS

11 Lee Road
Madbury, NH
March 8, 2009

Dear Superintendent _____,

Over the past twenty five years research documenting how parent involvement in schools influences student learning, development and achievement has received much attention and study. The findings of this research contributed to legislation such as the Goals 2000 Educate America Act and the No Child Left Behind Act; both support parent involvement in schools. While research documenting parental involvement is significant in itself, an even more important contribution came to the field by Joyce Epstein in the form of a redefinition of parental involvement where students' families were elevated to the status of co-equal partner. In light of the current research on school-family-community partnerships I will survey parents and teachers regarding their perceptions of the extent of parental involvement in their school.

The purpose of this letter is to request your permission to conduct research with parents and teachers in your school district. A total of 50 school districts throughout NH and 50 elementary and 50 secondary schools within the districts will be recruited to participate. New Hampshire school districts with elementary schools (K-8) and a high school (9-12) are being asked to join in this study. Two hundred parents and two hundred teachers within the schools will be asked to complete questionnaires. **Two full time certified elementary and two full time certified secondary school teachers will be included in this study from your school district (from _____ and _____)** This study asks that the principal recruit the certified teachers by starting with teachers whose name appears in the first and second position on an alphabetized list of the school's staff. One parent from the classroom of each elementary and secondary teacher who volunteers to participate in the study will be recruited by each teacher. The parents will be selected by starting with students whose last name appears first in alphabetical order in that classroom. Principals will distribute the questionnaires, cover letters and self-addressed pre-paid envelopes to the teachers. Teachers will ask the students of the parents chosen for the study to take the parent packet home to give to his or her parents; the packets contain a cover letter, a questionnaire, and a self-addressed postage paid envelope. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. This process will ensure anonymity. The self-addressed envelopes are numbered in the event some teachers and parents forget to return the completed questionnaire by April 17, 2009.

The completed surveys will become part of the data used to determine the building of school partnerships. The participation of parents and teachers is voluntary and the returned survey will serve as informed consent. Teachers and parents will be surveyed anonymously. Individual and school district anonymity is assured; confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research.

Thank you for considering this request. **Please reply via e-mail to bz@unh.edu by March 25, 2009.** If you approve, a cover letter for principals as well as a cover letter, survey instruments, and self-addressed stamped envelope will be mailed to the principal of each school for distribution to parents and
teachers.

Your district's participation is most important; this research depends on responses from school districts throughout New Hampshire. I appreciate your help and thank you for participating in a study that will help children in schools throughout New Hampshire.

Sincerely,
Brenda Zarnowski
Brenda Zarnowski
Doctoral Candidate in Education
The University of New Hampshire

March 30, 2009

Dear Principal,

Over the past twenty five years research documenting how parent involvement in schools benefits student learning and development; parent satisfaction with schools; and overall school improvement has received much attention and study. The findings of this research contributed to legislation such as the Goals 2000 Educate America Act and the NCLB Act; both support parent involvement in schools. While research documenting parental involvement is significant in itself, an even more important contribution came to the field by Joyce Epstein in the form of a redefinition of parental involvement where students' families were elevated to the status of co-equal partner. In light of the research on school-family-community partnerships I will survey parents and teachers regarding their perceptions of the extent of parent involvement in their school.

The purpose of this letter is to notify you that your superintendent approved your school's participation in this comprehensive study of 50 elementary and 50 secondary schools in districts throughout NH. It also seeks to enlist your help and support to conduct research with parents and teachers in your school. Two full time certified elementary and two full time certified secondary classroom teachers will be included in this study from your school district. **This study asks you recruit two full time certified teacher(s) from your school for this study by starting with classroom teachers whose names appear in the first and second position on an alphabetized staff list for your school.** One parent per classroom will be recruited by each teacher who volunteers to participate in the study. The parents will be selected by starting with students whose last name appears first in alphabetical order on the class list for that classroom. Please give the teacher the teacher cover letter, survey, and self-address postage paid envelope in the teacher packet mailed to you as well as the student packet with the same number on the return address of the envelope (top left hand corner). **For example, teacher packet #1 is given to the teacher and parent packet #1 is given to the same teacher, etc.**

Teachers will ask each student chosen for the study to take the parent packet home to give to his or her parents; a cover letter, a questionnaire, and the self-addressed postage paid envelope are in the packet. Parents are asked to complete the parent survey. The cover letter asks that all surveys be returned by April 17, 2009. To identify non-responders the surveys are numbered. If your teacher(s) or parent(s) do not return the survey within 10 days I will email a post-card to you and ask that you kindly give it to the teacher or student of the parents who did not return the survey.

The completed surveys will become part of the data used to determine the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding school partnerships throughout NH. The participation of parents and teachers is voluntary and the returned surveys will serve as informed consent. Teachers and parents will be surveyed anonymously. Individual and school district anonymity is assured; confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research.

Thank you for considering this request. Please reply via e-mail to: bz@unh.edu regarding any questions you may have.

Your district's participation is most important; this research depends on your school's response.

Sincerely,
Brenda Zarnowski
Brenda Zarnowski
Doctoral Candidate in Education
The University of New Hampshire

Your Ideas Are Important. Please Complete the Questionnaire.

March 30, 2009
11 Lee Road
Madbury, NH 03823

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Schools throughout New Hampshire are working to improve the ways that schools and families can help each other and help all children succeed.

To do the best job possible and to help schools throughout New Hampshire think about what they can do to work with you as a family we need your ideas. Your answers to the questions on the enclosed questionnaire will help schools think about ways that families and schools can work together to help all families and students.

Your son or daughter was given a packet with this letter, a questionnaire and a self-addressed stamped envelope. I am asking for a few minutes of your time to assist me in gathering information for my study, Parent and Teacher Perceptions: Parent Involvement in New Hampshire Schools. I am a doctoral candidate in the education department at the University of New Hampshire. To complete my program, I need to complete this study.

I want you to know that you will not be identified because your answers to the questions on the survey will be grouped with the answers from other families in other schools throughout New Hampshire. The questionnaire does not ask you to provide any information that will identify you. You may skip any question, but I hope you will answer them all.

Your participation is voluntary and return of the completed survey will serve as informed consent. All information is confidential. The self-addressed envelopes are numbered for follow-up purposes and will be used only in the event some parents forget to complete the questionnaire. Please return the enclosed survey in the self-addressed, postage paid envelope by April 17, 2009.

I would very much appreciate you participation in this study. Your ideas are important. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at 603-740-2900 or by email: bz@unh.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject please contact Julie Simpson in the UNH Office of Sponsored Research at 603-862-2003 or by email at julie.simpson@unh.edu.

Your participation is important; this research depends on your response.

I appreciate your help and thank you for providing information that will help children in schools throughout New Hampshire.

Sincerely,
Brenda Zarnowski
Brenda Zarnowski, Reading Specialist
Doctoral Candidate in Education
The University of New Hampshire

APPENDIX H (continued)

Your Ideas Are Very Important. Please Complete the Questionnaire

March 30, 2009
11 Lee Road
Madbury, NH 03823

Dear Teacher,

As a fellow New Hampshire teacher I am asking for a few minutes of your time to help me obtain information for a study I am conducting that will compare the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the extent of school partnerships in schools throughout New Hampshire. I am conducting research for a study entitled Parent and Teacher Perceptions: Parent Involvement in New Hampshire Schools to fulfill the requirements for a doctoral degree in the Department of Education at the University of New Hampshire.

Your help completing and returning the survey in the self-addressed stamped envelope and distributing the parent packet to a student whose name appears first in alphabetical order in your first class will assist me in gathering data for the study.

The student should take the packet containing a cover letter addressed to his or her parents, the survey, and a self-addressed stamped envelope and give it to his parents to complete. Kindly take a moment and record the student's name in your planner in the event I need to follow-up with a reminder for the parents to complete the survey

The information that you and the parents provide will become part of the data to determine the building of school partnerships. Your participation is voluntary and the returned survey will serve as informed consent. The time involved in completing the survey should be approximately 15 minutes. The survey does not ask you to provide any information that will identify you. The information you provide will remain anonymous and the data gathered will be reported as group data only. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research. The self-addressed envelope is numbered for follow-up purposes only in the event the survey is not returned.

Your participation in this survey will be very much appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at 603-740-2900 or by email: bz@unh.edu . If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject please contact Julie Simpson in the UNH Office of Sponsored Research at 603-862-2003 or by email: julie.simpson@unh.edu.

Please return the enclosed survey in the self-addressed, postage paid envelope by April 17, 2009.

Your participation is most important: this research depends on your response.

Sincerely,
Brenda Zarnowski
Brenda Zarnowski, Reading Specialist
Doctoral Candidate in Education
The University of New Hampshire